



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

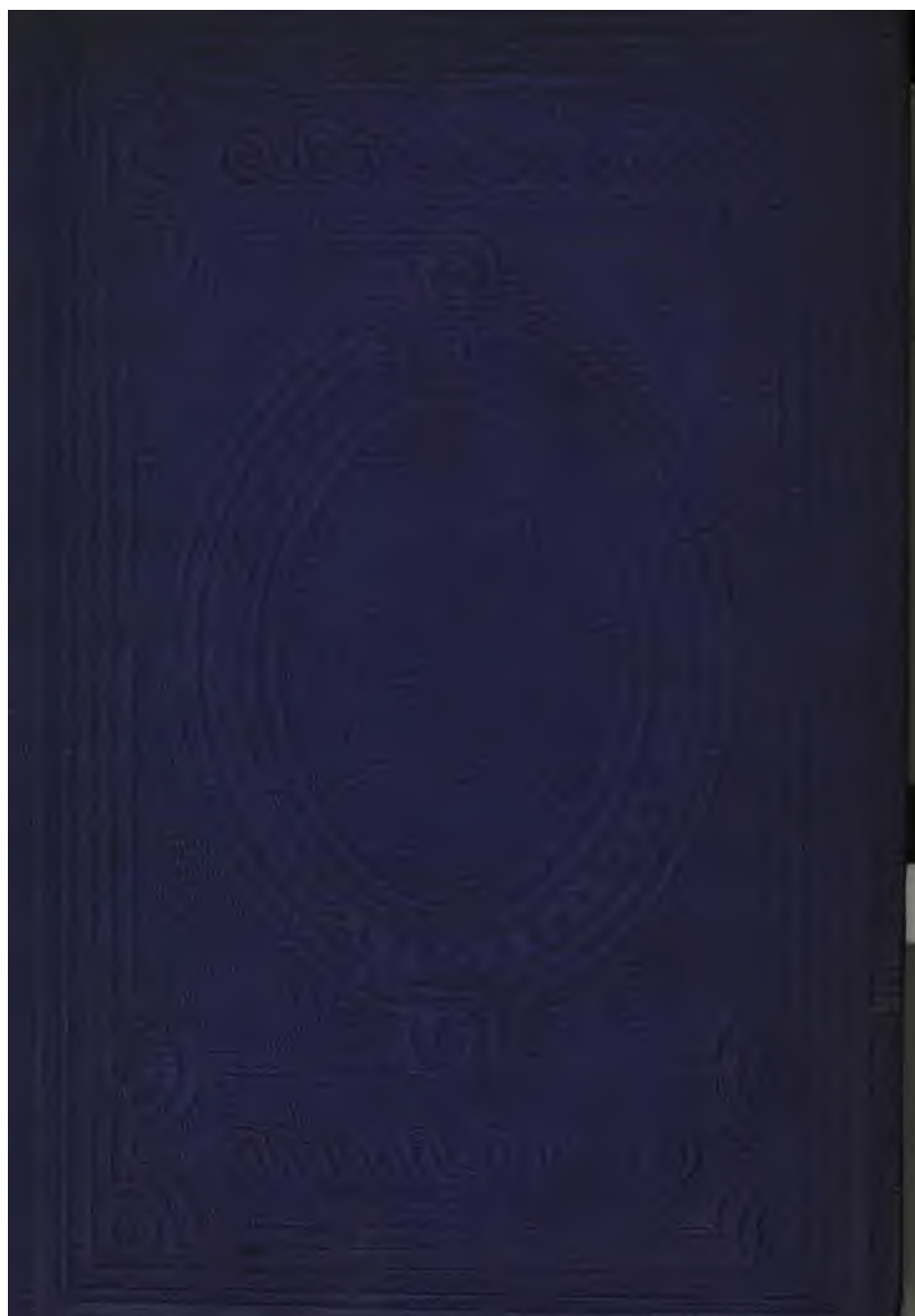
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

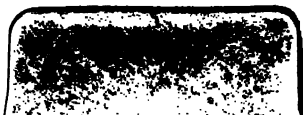
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

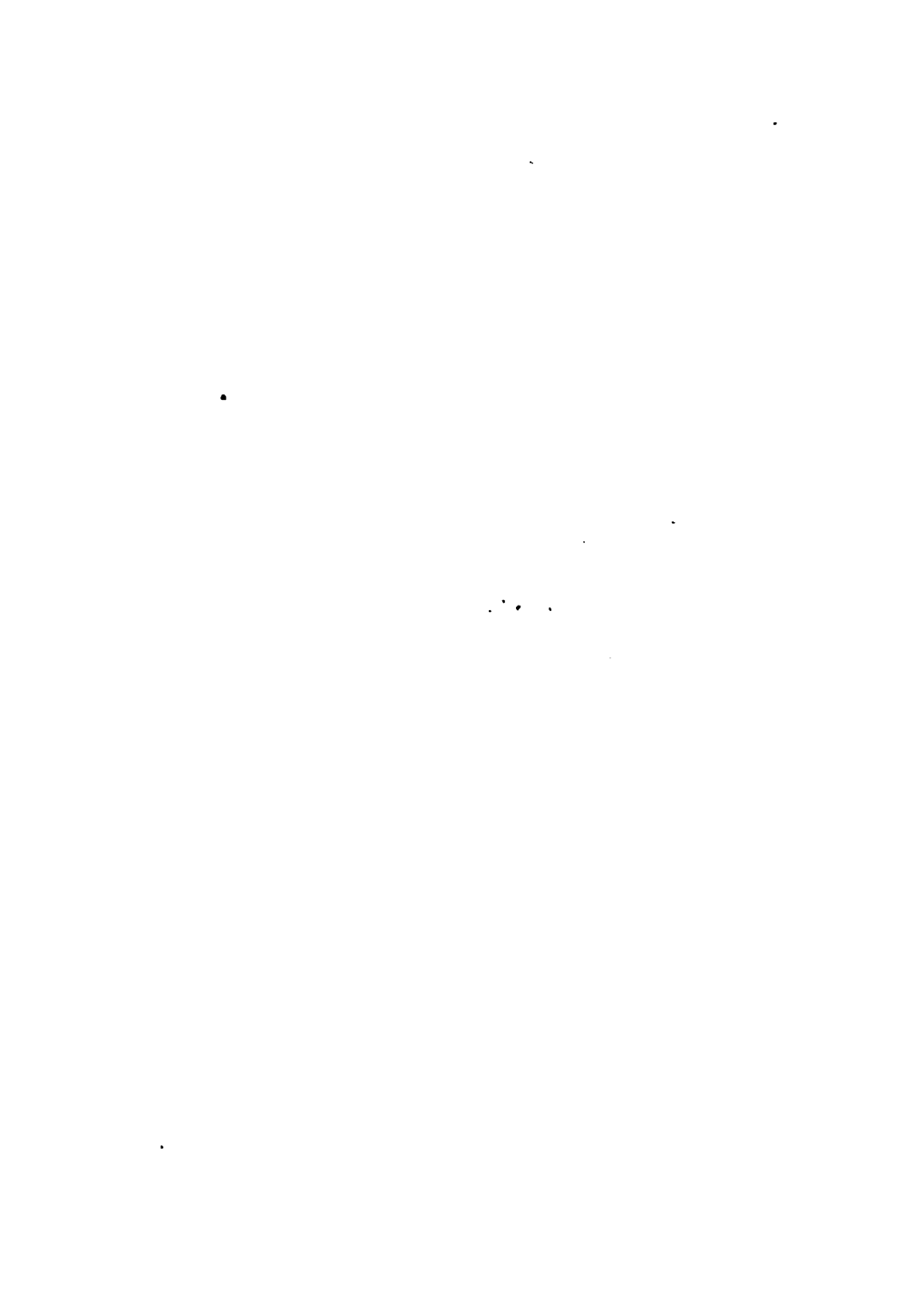




600071623P

250 . c. 114.

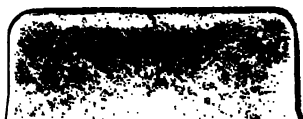






600071623P

250 . c. 114.





**BRIGHT SUNBEAMS IN DARK
DWELLINGS.**

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY.
PAUL'S WORK.

BRIGHT SUNBEAMS IN DARK
DWELLINGS.

A Tale of the Cobentry Distress.

By CLERUS.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
M.DCCC.LXI.



PREFACE.

THE universal sympathy which has been created on behalf of the poor suffering ribbon-weavers of Coventry, has induced the author to send the following pages to the press, in the hope that they may prove acceptable to those who may read them. His object in doing so has not been merely for the sake of publishing a book, but for higher and more important reasons. He wishes to shew how that Christianity can support, even under the most adverse circumstances—that true goodness and worth are not peculiar to one age or class only—and that wrong-doing and sin always bring in the end sorrow and disgrace. He has endeavoured to shew how much a noble and an upright spirit, bent upon doing that which is great and good, can accomplish ; and how a sincere and devoted love can shed abroad, in the dark dwellings of poverty and sorrow, the light of life, of happiness, and of peace.

The following account, which appeared in the *Birmingham Gazette*, may serve to give an idea of the

fearful distress which prevailed among the poor ribbon-weavers of Coventry and its neighbourhood—a state of things which intensified and increased as the winter advanced:—

“It is not within the power of language to portray, in all its terrible gloom, the calamity which has fallen upon the city of Coventry and the adjacent ribbon-weaving districts. Nor can any form of words be made to realise the depth of misery exhibited in individual cases of distress.

“In Coventry and the district round, as far as Nuneaton, there are about thirty thousand persons engaged in ribbon-weaving. At least ten thousand other persons—probably many more—depend for their livelihood on the money earned and spent by the weavers. Of this great mass of human beings, more than two-thirds are totally unemployed, and the remainder who are at work earn such small amounts that they can do little more than keep body and soul together. In Coventry alone the sum paid in weekly wages is less by £6000 than was paid at this time last year; and in the Nuneaton district the payments for wages during the last nine months are estimated at fully £20,000 less than those of the corresponding period of 1859. This difficulty has not come about suddenly, nor within a few weeks. For months past there has been growing up,

silently but steadily, a state of things which thoughtful men have from the first regarded with grave foreboding, and which has now reached a height so appalling that it strikes dismay into the stoutest hearts. All classes below those of the well-to-do middle rank are involved in the calamity. The artisans, wherever they could do so, have sold or pawned their furniture, and even their spare clothes. The small shopkeepers have given credit far beyond their means, and are now themselves suffering the privations they have helped to relieve in others. The owners of houses share in the general distress—their property is, for the most part, rendered for a time entirely unremunerative, for while the people cannot get bread enough to relieve their hunger, they cannot be expected to find means to pay rent. Indeed, we are told that in some parts of the city rent is just now a merely nominal term. The blow, it is most lamentable to say, has fallen heaviest on those who have worked the hardest, and been most distinguished for provident habits. Hundreds of intelligent, industrious men, who have saved out of their earnings money to furnish their homes decently, and to buy costly looms, are now literally without a crust of bread. They cannot sell their looms, for these are valueless excepting for the purposes of their trade, and there is no trade to employ them. They dare not touch the remnants of their

furniture, for the moment they did so, the landlord would seize it for arrears of rent, and what remained after satisfying him would be taken by the butcher and baker to pay for meat and bread. These men, honest, independent, and self-reliant throughout life, cannot bring themselves to ask for charity, or to accept parish relief; they sit at home, as was said to us, 'gnawing their very hearts for shame and hunger,' and when they have been sought out, and help forced upon them, most heart-rending scenes have been witnessed by the ministers of relief. Things were bad enough even while the weather remained moderately warm; but now that winter has set in with unusual rigour, the distress threatens to become overwhelming, for the people must have fuel as well as food, and they ought to receive more and better food than the relief committee have yet been able to give them. A few cases taken at random from the applications made at a relief sub-committee meeting, which we attended, will portray more forcibly than any mere description the necessities of the people on whose behalf we now appeal for help. The cases are here recorded precisely in the order in which they came before the committee. There has been no selection for the purpose of exciting a sensation, and the fact that these are by no means the worst cases that could be found, but are simply

ordinary examples of many hundreds of others, testifies to the depth and magnitude of the general distress :—

“1. A woman, aged 20 ; out of work for nine weeks ; pays 1s. per week for her lodging, and has been turned out because she cannot pay. Allowed 1s. in money, and 6d. in bread.

“2. Man and wife, aged 30 ; out of work for seven weeks. Allowed 2s. 6d. relief.

“3. Widow, aged 57 ; has had only three weeks' work since the strike. Rent greatly in arrear. Allowed 1s. 6d. relief.

“4. Man and wife, each aged 55 ; four children, one of them a daughter, ill. The whole family out of work for six weeks, excepting the father, who earned 2s. last week. Allowed 5s. relief.

“5. Man and wife, with three children, and wife's sister, near her confinement. The women are charwomen. Total earnings of the family for some weeks past, about 1s. 6d. per week ; rent, 1s. 3d. Allowed 4s. 6d. and some soup.

“6. Man and wife, the latter ill ; one child ; rent, 1s. Ten weeks out of work. Allowed 2s. 3d.

“7. Man and wife, each aged forty years ; six children ; rent, 2s. Out of work twenty-seven weeks. Allowed five loaves and 2s. 6d. per week by the parish.

“8. Man and wife, aged respectively twenty-seven

and twenty years; four children. Out of work three weeks; rent, 2s. 9d. Allowed 6s.

"9. Widow, aged thirty-seven years; four children under twelve years old; 1s. 6d. per week rent. No work beyond occasionally a day's washing. Allowed 6s.

"10. Man and wife; five children. No work for ten weeks, but at the end of that time the man obtained some work, and at once declined further relief.

"11. Woman, with three children; the husband gone to Lancashire, in hope of getting work. The woman near her confinement. No work for twenty weeks.

"12. Widow, three little children, and a daughter aged seventeen years, with a child of her own. No work for a month; no furniture in the house.

"These are simply ordinary cases, and might be multiplied by the hundred; but we have cited enough to shew the character of the destitution that prevails. One poor fellow told us that since last June he had had no work, and he and his wife and child had provided themselves with scanty food by selling their little property, down even to their bedding. At last the man went to the workhouse, and obtained two days' work a-week—all he could get—at the corn-mill, for which he received 1s. and two loaves; but his strength had so fallen off from want of food that he could no longer work at the mill, and had to be set to pick

oakum. 'For a whole day,' he said, 'I and my wife and child have not had a mouthful of food.' There was some talk, he had heard, of setting the weavers to trench and drain the 'Lammas lands;' but, as he despondingly said, 'Before I can work on the land, I must be fed. I am so weak that I can hardly handle a spade, let alone drive it into the ground.' And his case, he declared, was not the worst; there were many whom he knew to be worse off than himself."

More need not be said, by way of preface, to shew the fearful distress which has for so long a time hung over that city and neighbourhood; and which has more or less affected the upper and middle classes also. The large amount that has been sent from all parts of Great Britain, and from different parts of the world, for the relief of those operatives, has proved the Christian and humanising principle that the suffering and sorrowful are our brothers equally with the happy and cheerful. That feeble and piteous cry of poverty and want, which ascended up from the starving thousands, struck upon a sympathetic chord of the great human family and met with a hearty response. This tells its own tale; and a cheering lesson it is. That uprightness, brotherly concord, and love may increase and grow around us; and that these pages may tend to the cherishing and strengthening of those Christian

principles, is the earnest desire and prayer of the author.

“Sat—no bright fire was shining,
To cheer her humble cot;
Sat—thinking and repining,
For—not *her own* sad lot;
Sat—grieving for another—
With grief untold and wild—
Yet wishing grief to smother;—
A mother and her child.

“What gave that mother anguish,
And caused the sigh to rise?
She saw her offspring languish,
And waste before her eyes.
Waste—and she could not aid it;
Waste—as it by her slept;
Its sole friend He who made it;—
For this that mother wept.

“Ye who talk of fortitude,
How noble 'tis to bear,
Behold one with it imbued;
And sympathy declare!
She does not feeling stifle,
While all the world looks on,
She covets not honour's trifle,
She weeps,—but known to none.

“Is this not truly noble,
Though she is only poor?
Wouldst thou thyself ennoble?
Help her distress to cure.
Give, if thou 'rt of aught possess'd.
Doth not the Highest say,
‘Giving, lo, thou shalt be blest;
Behold, *I will repay.*’”

Coventry Standard.

"APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRESSED OPERATIVES
IN THE RIBBON-WEAVING DISTRICTS OF COVENTRY
AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

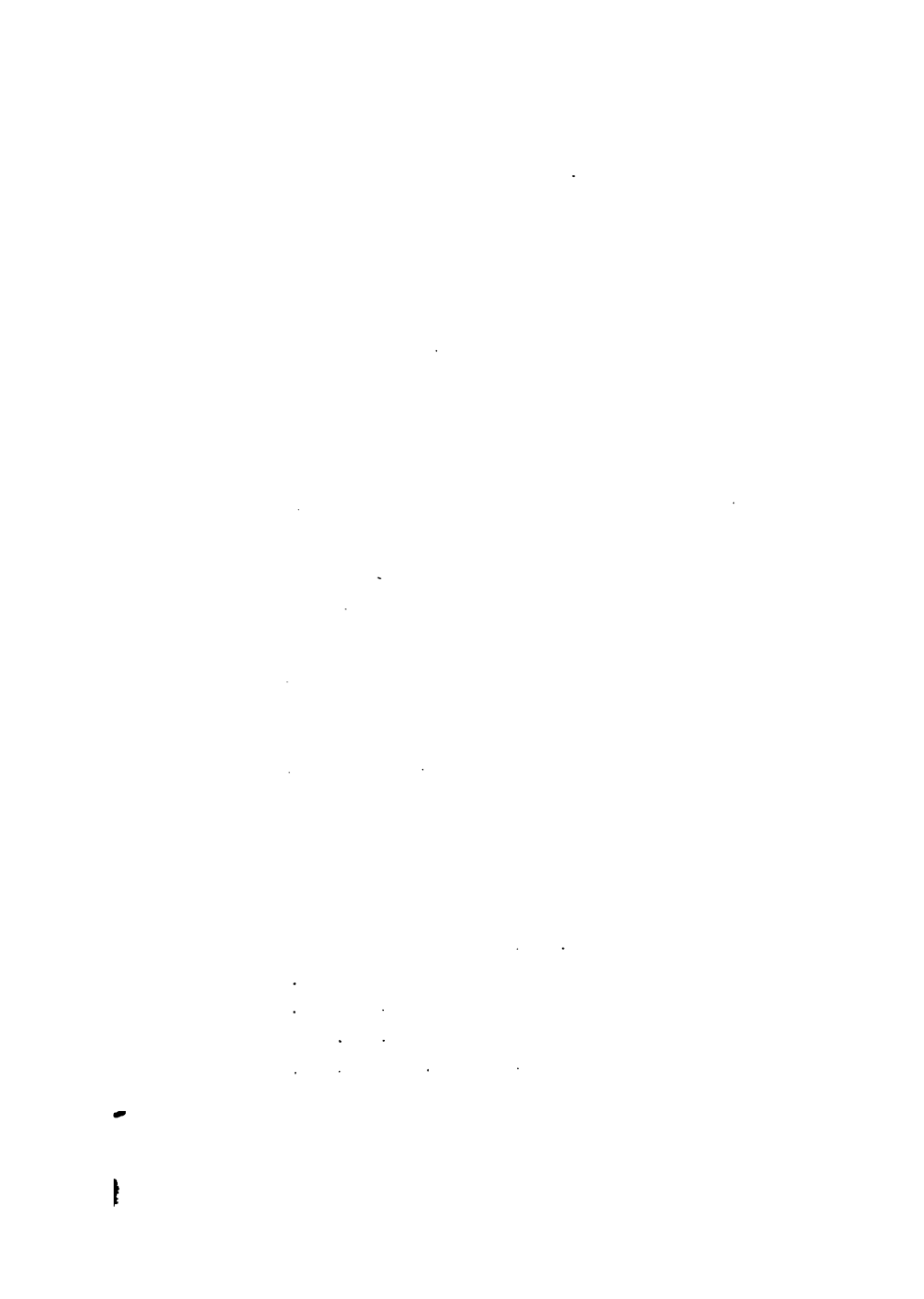
"The present depressed state of the ribbon manufacture in Coventry and its neighbourhood has been attended with disastrous consequences to a large population. Probably between 50,000 and 60,000 people are more or less affected by the existing stagnation in the trade. All local efforts to alleviate the increasing distress seem inadequate. The better and more respectable class of artisans are enduring privations of the most aggravated character. They are, in many cases, compelled to break up homes, to obtain which they had invested all the capital of a laborious life, and to dispose of their property at the greatest sacrifice. Indeed, many of them are compelled now, for the first time, to throw themselves on parochial relief, whilst others remain almost in a state of starvation. There appears no immediate prospect of any alleviation of this pressure. In this season then of difficulty, it is thought that an appeal to the sympathy of the country at large might induce many philanthropists to come forward and assist in mitigating the sufferings of the operatives during the coming winter. A committee has been formed under the presidency of the Lord-Lieutenant of the County

and the Mayor of Coventry, consisting of the county and city Magistrates, the former Mayors of Coventry, the Clergy, and all Ministers of religion in the parishes requiring relief, for the purpose of collecting funds to assist the distressed operatives of Coventry and its neighbourhood. These funds will be distributed to all well-authenticated and deserving cases of distress, without regard to religious sect or party, in Coventry, Nuneaton, and the surrounding district. The kind support and aid of all who can feel for their fellow-creatures thus suffering is earnestly invited.

“LEIGH.”

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. WARWICKSHIRE,	1
„ II. POINTING HEAVENWARDS,	4
„ III. THE UNWELCOME ERRAND,	11
„ IV. THE JOURNEY,	19
„ V. THE FAITHFUL PASTOR,	36
„ VI. LIVING TO THE LORD,	48
„ VII. THE WAVE BREAKS ON THE SHORE,	57
„ VIII. HOPE IN ADVERSITY,	67
„ IX. THE WEDDING,	72
„ X. THE PHASES OF LIFE,	88
„ XI. THE REFUSAL,	97
„ XII. RETROSPECTIVE.	106
„ XIII. NOT SO WORLDLY,	120
„ XIV. A DISCOVERY,	131
„ XV. THE RISING CLOUD,	139
„ XVI. NOBLE HEARTEDNESS,	145
„ XVII. GOOD NEWS,	157
„ XVIII. HARD TIMES,	166
„ XIX. TRANSPLANTED,	181
„ XX. FAINT, BUT PURSUING,	191
„ XXI. NOBLE AIMS,	208



BRIGHT SUNBEAMS IN DARK DWELLINGS.

CHAPTER I.

WARWICKSHIRE.

“ To pray from a deep and tender heart,
With all things praying anew,
The birds and the bees and the whispering trees,
And heather bedropt with dew;
To be one of those early worshippers,
And pour the carol too ! ”

OF all the counties in this “ Happy Old England ” of ours, none claim a greater share of interest, and none have obtained a more world-wide celebrity, than Warwickshire. As a place of residence, we should prefer many counties to Warwickshire. It has but little of the rich scenery of Herefordshire, with its hop-yards and apple-orchards, its wood-covered hills and its rich valleys of feeding land. It possesses none of the grand scenery of the Wye neighbourhood, nor any of the bold, striking, majestic grandeur of Westmoreland and Cumberland. And yet everybody has heard of its running

brooks, its shady lanes, its magnificent timber, and its peaceful homesteads. The birth of Shakspeare, Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth," Bulwer's "Last of the Barons," the tales of Guy of Warwick, Peeping Tom of Coventry, and the Lady Godiva shows, these, and many more which might be enumerated, have immortalised Warwickshire, and made it of world-wide celebrity. And however far one may be from home, if one lets out the fact of being a native of Warwickshire, a dozen and one questions are immediately put to one. This questioning is sometimes highly amusing, as it gives one an idea of the tastes and pursuits of the individuals with whom one is brought into contact. "Have you seen the large oaks in Stoneleigh Park?" said a shrewd man of business to the author the other day, when travelling by railway; whilst another fine-looking, red-faced man leaned forward in his seat, and laughingly said, "What about old Guy's porridge-pot?" Any one would have said at once that one was well up in his pound-shilling-and-pence table, whilst the other evidently knew what good living was. Little children will climb upon one's knee and ask to be told about Peeping Tom, and the big giant that slew so many men, and killed the wild cow on Dunsmore Heath: and once on a time a lady looked upon the author as being little more than half-civilised, because he assured her that he had lived for some years in Warwickshire, and had neither visited Kenilworth nor the birthplace of the

great English dramatist. Therefore, in bringing before our readers a neighbourhood and people that have been immortalised by the novelist, the historian, and the martyrologist respectively, should we fail in imparting an interest to these pages, it will be owing entirely to some defect in ourselves. A narrative which portrays the gentle forbearance and patient endurance of a truly Christian spirit, which describes the manly strivings of one bent on fighting nobly and well the hard battle of life, and which speaks of the kindly offices which are being tendered on all sides around us, we trust will prove interesting to all our readers, and therefore we make the attempt.

CHAPTER II.

POINTING HEAVENWARDS.

"Catching gleams of temple spires,
Hearing notes of angel choirs,
Where, as yet unseen of them,
Comes the new Jerusalem."

THE bells of St Michael's Church, in the ancient city of Coventry, were enlivening the inhabitants with their chimes one Friday evening in the month of July 1845, as Rosa Melton left her home for a few minutes in the hopes of finding her father. It had been market-day, and numerous country vehicles, from the small donkey-cart of the village carrier to the high-wheeled dog-cart of the well-to-do farmer, might be seen passing along the various streets of that far-famed city. Here and there the stall-keepers were packing up their unsold goods, and an occasional shopman might be seen taking down his wares from outside his windows prior to closing. A money-making dealer in grain turned out of an inn, followed by a farmer, who seemed to stick to him for the purpose of effecting a sale, even at the close of the market : "Come, now, say a shilling a-quarter more," said the farmer to the other, taking

hold of his button-hole so as not to let him escape. "No, I tell you; I won't give any more than I have offered you," was the firm reply.

"Very well, I suppose you must have it. The money's sure, or I wouldn't take that price."

The button-hole was loosed. A hard gripe of the hands secured the bargain, and the two hurried off in different directions along the now quiet streets. The two churches of St Michael and the Holy Trinity reared their lofty spires on high, and overlooked the tops of the loftiest buildings of the town. Pass along what street you might, their gray stones would be seen pointing heavenwards, as if to remind the citizens of a nobler and better city of which they were the representatives. From Broadgate, Cross Cheaping, and the Corn Exchange, where men of business "most do congregate," they may be seen standing like two holy sisters, reminding the buyer and the seller of uprightness and fair dealing, and at regular intervals proclaiming in loud tones the rapid flight of another short hour of man's existence. This they have done for centuries. May their warnings be regarded by you, O buyer and seller, and by you all, O worthy citizens!

The sun was still a considerable distance above the horizon on the evening above mentioned, and many of the inhabitants were leaving the town to enjoy an evening stroll in the parks and Lammas lands which lie around the city. Not so poor Rosa Melton. Her

mother was a great invalid, and her father was given to intemperate habits. In other respects he was not an unkind husband or father : but the curse of drunkenness is quite sufficient of itself to bring a blight upon any family, and to make a dark, sad, sorrowful home. And so it was in the case of the Meltons. The wife had once or twice seen her husband the worse for liquor even before marrying him ; but loving him with all the devotedness of a woman's affection, she hoped he would mend after marriage, and so consented and became his wife. For a while he did mend, but ere long he again gave way to his old, what he termed, "weakness." One only child, Rosa, had been born to them, of whom the father was dotingly fond ; and once more the loving wife hoped that as the child grew up she would be an additional means of influencing the father and husband aright.

O gentle, noble, loving woman ! there is more bravery in that tender frame of yours than in the rougher and more powerful one of the other sex, even though he win a hundred battles, and rush to the very mouth of the cannon. There is more true magnanimity of soul in that patient endurance of wrong, in that gentle forbearance, and in those winning, loving ways which are so peculiarly your own, than in us who have to fight the harder and sterner battles of life. And how often, when we are defeated and throw down our weapons in despair, do you take them up and flinch

not, fail not, till you have nobly and gloriously won! Accept this, O gentle reader, as a tribute to your worth.

It must not be thought that Oliver Melton was a regular sot—far from it. He had a small factory of his own, and for days together would attend most diligently to business, and look after the hands whom he employed. And for some time after Rosa was born, he would be several weeks without being “the worse for liquor.” But after the novelty of being a parent had passed away, he must indulge once more in the evening hour at the gin-palace, and in going to an occasional excess.

Ah, Melton, it was the same with you as with thousands more. It was not merely the shilling or eighteenpence which was spent in an evening; though this would amount to pounds in the course of the year. Neither was it that gradual disinclination for business which constituted the worst feature in your evil course; though this in the end would lead you to poverty and want. It was all very well for you to salve over your conscience by saying that you did no more than most men—that life was given for enjoyment—and that you were not a bad husband after all. You know that did not do. That pale, loving face at home, which sometimes turned away from you to hide the tear that would come whether or not, told a different story. It was all very well for you to tell her that she did not

look well, and to promise her at times a "run down to the sea-side:" you knew better than anybody what would bring back the roses to her cheeks once more, and what would have made you a prosperous and happy family. You had promised "to love and to cherish" her till death parted you: but that curse of drink has been the means of "eating the roses away" from the cheeks of many a one besides those of your own wife.

It is the nature of any evil habit to increase by indulgence, and as the victim of it grows older. Such would, doubtless, have been the case with Oliver Melton; but as his child Rosa grew in years, her influence over him increased likewise. So that at the time alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, he had again fought his way back to the moral point which he occupied during the early childhood of his daughter. Whenever he "indulged too freely," that time was sure to be on a market-day. The ordinary quiet of the town he got through pretty well; but on the Friday, when the town was full and more excitement was going on, home-attraction and home-influence often proved insufficient. So that market-days were more dreaded by poor Rosa Melton than any other day in the week; not only for the trouble which it brought on their home, but because she was often put to the blush in going to seek him. Poor Rosa! Market-days have been dreaded by many others as well

as yourself. Many a wife, and daughter, and sister have dreaded them, because they knew that on those days the loved one bartered away, not merely the goods or the grain whose samples he took to exhibit, but also his prosperity, his good name, and even his very soul, to the evil one. They, like you, have seen the business gradually decline for the worse—they, like you, have seen the one who ought to have been the main-stay of the family becoming ruined in health by the power of the cup.

On that July evening before mentioned, Rosa felt unusually sorrowful and low-spirited. The day had been very hot, and now, as she looked out of the window and saw many of the citizens strolling along to enjoy the breezes of the country, she thought how happy she should be if her father would only give up his evil habit, and take her and her mother for a quiet walk into the park in an evening. The tear stood in her eye as she turned away from the window, but, concealing it from her mother, she said, in as cheerful a manner as she could—

“Take care of yourself, dear mother; I will soon be back again. I think I shall soon find him, and, perhaps, we may prevail on him to take a short walk, if only round the ‘big church-yard.’”

“I hope you will soon find him, my dear child; it pains me to think of your having such an errand.”

Poor woman, the tears came into your eyes also, as

10 BRIGHT SUNBEAMS IN DARK DWELLINGS.

your daughter closed the door. And though they were seen by no mortal eye, yet there was One above who witnessed them, and who is acquainted with the sorrows of all His children.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNWELCOME ERRAND.

“When the world my heart is rending
With its heaviest storm of care,
My glad thoughts, to God ascending,
Find a refuge from despair.
There’s a hand of mercy near me,
Though the waves of trouble roar;
There’s an hour of rest to cheer me,
When the toils of life are o’er.”

PROCEEDING along High Street, for a short distance, her mind was somewhat diverted from its melancholy thoughts by watching the different country vehicles and their occupants which she met as she went along. But, ere she had gone far, the thoughts of her errand again recurred to her with all their melancholy forebodings. Leaving, therefore, the more frequented street, she turned up Hay Lane, which seemed more in accordance with her feelings, and which brought her to the top part of what is called “the big church-yard.” Here she paused a while to look up at those lofty spires which were connected with the earliest associations of her childhood. A short distance from where she stood was still the low tombstone from which she used to

delight to jump, and then climb back again to repeat over again the same feat as before, whilst her nurse gossiped with some other acquaintance of the same calling. The jackdaws were still playing about the buttresses of the spires, and pursuing each other through the loops and crevices as they used to do when she sat and watched them, and wondered if any of them ever flew up so high as the weathercock which soared far, far above their highest flights. And those white saints and apostles which stood in rows one above another in their respective niches up the side of the tower—there they were still. Associated also in her memory with bad men, and scenes of violence, which had been drawn and highly coloured with a nurse's art, was there the city jail, with its gloomy appearance and its windowless red-bricked front. Why did they build it near to those beautiful churches and lofty spires? Why did they put the prison, where so many wicked men and women are shut up, close by the temples of God, where good people go to sing and pray? Was it in order that its wretched walls might be made more holy by being reared in the neighbourhood of those sacred buildings? We sometimes have reasoned the same, Rosa. Perhaps it was in order that the last scene of the outer world, which the criminal saw before being shut out from public society which he had outraged, might be an impressive one. Perhaps it was, that as the jailer threw open the door to receive him,

and the last "move on" was spoken to him by the man in blue, he might have one sacred reminder of a Father who still loved His wandering children—that, as he crouched in his narrow cell and brooded over his wretchedness, he might still catch a few notes of the pealing organ and hear the song of praise from the worshippers, and be cheered by the hope of forgiveness, sinner though he was—and that the chimes of the Sabbath-bells might remind him of holier and happier climes to which even he might press onwards and ultimately find his way. Perhaps it was, that when he again left his prison-house, once more a free man, and as the thought occurred to him that the future would now be more difficult to him than ever, from his having so grievously fallen, he might see those heavenward-pointing spires reminding him where to look for help, and then go on to strive, to pray, to conquer.

Thoughts similar to these passed through her mind as she paused to look at objects so familiar to her. And though it has taken us some time to express them, they were merely the reflections of a few seconds. As she was about to proceed onwards again, the organ in St Michael's Church began to play; and as no one was passing near, she remained to listen. The music was that known as "Lord of all power and might," and the time, the quietness around her, and the solemn pealing of the organ, had such a soothing influence over her troubled mind, that although she secretly blamed her-

self for lingering there, she felt almost bound to the spot. The last notes of the fine old organ seemed to die away amidst the aisles of the building as the piece came to an end, and she enraptured. "Oh, what must heaven be!" thought she, as she turned to look at the old building before hurrying away, for she was afraid to stop till the organist began another piece, lest she should linger still. The old saints and apostles looked down upon her in a kinder and more benignant manner than ever. The western sun now made long shadows, but those sister spires seemed to point higher and higher towards heaven, and as she departed from their sacred precincts, she felt happier than she had done all day before.

May it be so with you, O kind reader! When the sun of your life makes long shadows, and is fast approaching the horizon of your day, may the tendency of your thoughts be pointing heavenward to a happier and an eternal rest!

As this was not the first time Rosa Melton had been on the same errand, and as she generally found her father at one particular house, she had, by her visits there from time to time, and much more by her quiet, bashful, and lady-like demeanour, quite gained the landlady's sympathy and interest on her side. And as it was, moreover, a place where many of the country people put up during market-day, and, consequently, where many of the wives and daughters of the farmers

met their husbands and parents, her going there would hardly have been noticed by a stranger, except that it was a time of the day when most of those from the country had left the town.

"You shan't have to go amidst the company to seek him," said the warm-hearted landlady to her on one occasion, "but come down to my little parlour, and I will go and fetch him out to you. Were it not that he would go to other houses, and, perhaps, drink more than he does here, he should not remain here at all."

She therefore acted according to the landlady's kind suggestion. On the present occasion she had scarcely been waiting more than a few minutes, when her father joined her.

"Come, father," said she, "I wanted you at home this evening to take me a nice walk into the country; for it has been so hot all the day I feel quite wearied out."

"Well, my child, suppose we go now?"

"No, it is getting too late; and besides I promised mother I would soon be back again; so let us go home."

We can hardly tell which are the most to be pitied—the parents who have bad children, or the children that have bad parents. Neither need we stop to consider, as they both claim our sympathy to the utmost. In the former case, we should suppose there is more sorrow felt; and in the latter case, more shame. That

the loving parents—who fondly watched over their offspring during the tender years of infancy, and thought no sacrifice too great to increase their happiness and advantage during the season of youth—should, in after years, be rewarded by base ingratitude, and low, grovelling habits on the part of their children: in such instances, there must be sorrow indeed. And, on the other hand, when a child has chosen the good path, and not only looks in vain for direction and advice from his parents, but is also made to blush for shame, and to hide his head from the public gaze because of his parents' vices and misconduct: such a one deserves all the pity and kindness which we can render.

As Rosa Melton drew her father's arm within her own to steady him, though he was not so very far gone in drink but that he could walk nearly as well as usual, and though the streets were comparatively quiet, she felt as though a hundred eyes were upon her.

"How dull it all seems now," said her father, in a low, thick voice, as they went along. "The play is over, the curtains are drawn, the musicians and company have departed, and all the lights are put out," he continued, as he looked around him.

"And this is the sad finale," sighed the unhappy daughter.

"Come, my pet, what is that sigh for? Cheer up a bit. Look at 'Peeping Tom' yonder, and tell me what you think he is gazing at."

"Nay, my dear father, look at those two sister spires there, or at their third sister down yonder, and tell me what they remind you of, or whither they point you to."

"You are right, my child ; come, I will go with you to church next Sunday ;" and the two proceeded in silence along the quiet streets.

"I wonder how many sorrowful hearts have passed along these streets," thought Rosa, as they went on towards home. "On this market-day only how different have been the feelings of those who have here met together in crowds ! The light-hearted and the sad, the anxious and the careless, the unfortunate and the prosperous, have jostled against each other as they passed along, and all will in a few years be succeeded by new faces of similar thoughts, and tastes, and feelings to themselves."

She looked up at the portion of sky which was seen between the rows of houses on each side the street ; a few bright fleecy clouds were dotted over it, beautifully tinged by the rays of the now setting sun, and seemed to speak to her of quietness, happiness, and rest, beyond them, and she felt comforted.

Yes, poor girl, there is a bright and glorious country up there, where no change takes place but for the increased happiness of its blessed inhabitants ; and every great tidal movement of Time's ocean which breaks on its shore, lands in safety thereon numbers of those who

18 BRIGHT SUNBEAMS IN DARK DWELLINGS.

have long been buffeted and tossed about by the waves.
May you, Rosa, and he who writes these pages, and
you, kind reader, who peruse them, get a safe landing
on those peaceful shores!

CHAPTER IV.

THE JOURNEY.

"My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay;
And call it my supreme delight
To hear Thy dictates and obey.

"What is my being, but for Thee,
Its sure support, its noblest end?
Thy ever-smiling face to see,
And serve the cause of such a Friend."

"AY, Aldridge! why, you seldom come to see us; what's up now?" said the station-master at a small country railway station in the west of England, to an honest, good-tempered-looking young man, that then drove into the yard.

"Well, I be come to meet the next train, and to take back some folks as be coming by it: when will it be here?"

"It is due in five minutes," said the railway official, hoisting the signal; "how many do you expect?"

"Only three as I've come to meet; but if there be more, I daresay the party won't care about my giving 'em a neighbourly lift like."

"Well, mind your horse when the train comes ; you won't have long to wait."

In a few minutes more the train arrived, discharging some of its passengers, and picking up two others, and hurried on its way to its final destination. There was a slight bustle for a few minutes whilst the few passengers collected their luggage, gave up their tickets, and made a few passing remarks to each other, and all was quiet again. Aldridge shut up his three passengers in the car, hoisted their luggage on the top, save a small bandbox or two, which, no doubt, contained a portion of female attire, then mounted his box, and drove away.

"Well now, to my mind, that's a lot as looks as if they wanted a change," soliloquised he to himself as he drove along. "I dare be bound, they come from some of them there big towns, where they can't see the sun for smoke. I was once in Bristol for a week, but, Lor', I was choked with smoke and dirt. That wouldn't do for us, would it, my Bonny?" said he, addressing himself to his horse, and gently touching it with the whip at the same time. "I daresay they've all been stived up in some town like that all this blessed summer, but our sea-breezes will soon blow the dust out of their throats. As for the old gentleman, he's big enough, but somehow I wouldn't give much for his life. Fancy! didn't the old boy groan in just getting out of that train to my carriage? but, howsomever, if there is any place in

England that will set him up like, it is our village, and I know they'll say so when they get there. It beats all these fine waterin' places as I've heerd say; and it's so quiet-like, why I should be werrited out o' my life in them there bustling places. No, that wouldn't do for us neither, would it, my Bonny?" As his appeals to the horse were generally accompanied by a slight touch of the whip or shake of the reins, the animal responded by a more quickened pace for a few yards.

How much longer the driver might have soliloquised to himself is uncertain; but, just then, the window of the car was let down, and the younger of the two females put out her head to inquire "how far it was to the village where they were bound, and what time they should get there?"

"Well, I reckon we shan't be more nor another hour; just in time like for you to see what a pretty place it is before dark."

"Thank you," was the reply.

The window was again drawn up, and "coachy" was left to his own soliloquy once more. "Well now, that's what I call a pretty face if ever there was one, and them there eyes of hers are reg'lar beauties. I should think they've got what these bookmakers call 'hexpression.' And she's so kind-like to the two old uns; that looks good of her, and makes her prettier than ever in my 'pinion. If she were to set those beautiful eyes on me, and say, 'Simon, would you kindly help

me in my difficulty?' or, 'Simon, will you please do me a favour?' Lor', why, I could go through fire and water to help her. Our rector says I ought to do good even to my enemies, but I don't think I've got any. If I had, I know which I'd sooner help; this gentle lady here"—here the whip struck the top of the car—"or one as comes and says, 'Simon, you're an idle rascal,' or, 'Simon, you don't know nothing at all,' and such-like speeches. Howsomever, I suppose I'm wrong. I hope the old rector will see her, he'll talk to her like her own father, and I know she'll love him, for everybody does. Our schoolmaster calls it 'mutooal 'trac-shun' when parties like one another; what that means I don't know, but I say, 'birds of a feather flock together;' and I know, if the old rector sees her, he'll like her, for she looks so good; and if she don't like him, she'd better not say so in our village."

Perhaps our readers may have already guessed that the parties referred to in this chapter were none other than Oliver Melton, his wife and daughter. He had promised his daughter to accompany her to church on the Sunday after being led home as recorded in the last chapter; but, alas! how little we know what may be on the morrow! Many a one makes promises of amendment, and forms resolutions for good, to be carried out at some future time, but ere the time arrives they can no longer fulfil their promises or carry out their good resolutions. So was it with Oliver Melton.

Soon after arriving at home with his daughter, he was seized with a dangerous illness which would have been severe in any case, but in that of one who had impaired his constitution by intemperate habits, the illness was doubly severe.

For days his life was despaired of, and although a favourable turn had taken place, yet, so entirely prostrated had he been, that for weeks he was unable to rise. But, towards the middle of September, he had so far recovered as to be able to leave his bed : and in answer to poor Rosa's question as to "what was his candid opinion respecting the invalid," the doctor replied that "in all probability he would not get over the winter, if he ever lived to see the beginning of it."

"Can nothing else be done to save his life?" said the poor girl.

"Nothing in the way of medical help; and as regards nursing, I am sure he has everything in that way that could be desired. If anything could patch him up for a time, it would be a change to the sea-side for a few weeks this autumn; but I fear it is cruel to suggest such a scheme to you, and, moreover, it is altogether uncertain what the result might be."

"For once, doctor, you have made me wish I was rich; but I fear it cannot be done;" and a tear would force its way.

During his illness, Oliver Melton had realized the

blessing of having a truly Christian wife and daughter. Day after day, and night after night, had they watched over him in turn, ministering to his every want, reading with him, talking to him of Christian truth and blessedness, and praying with him at times when he wished or would consent to it. During all this time his worldly affairs had been gradually getting worse : so that by the time he was once more enabled to leave his bed, he had but little more than the furniture of his house and his small factory of looms. He had, however, become humbled, softened, and, as his wife and daughter hoped, changed also ; and therefore they were contented and thankful. Desirous also of leaving no means untried to prolong the life of an individual who, with all his faults, was still so dear to them, they contrived, by the sale of some few pieces of manufactured goods which were in the house, and by that of one of the looms, to raise a few pounds in order to afford him the necessary change. But as their little sum would last but a short time at any of the more frequented watering-places, a neighbour who had lately made a pedestrian tour through the western counties informed them of a quiet, pretty village close on the shore, and had moreover written to the landlord of the village inn to provide them accommodation for a night, and to inquire for lodgings in any of the cottages of the village. All being thus arranged, they left the fine old town of Coventry for the western coast ; and it was

thither Simon Aldridge was now conveying them in the only car which the village possessed.

"Well, I'm blowed," said that worthy individual, as he got down to walk up the last hill, which looked down upon the village whither they were going, "if I don't believe they are all crying together. Wait till we get to the top of the hill, and then won't I make them open their eyes with wonderment? for if there is one prettier place than another, it is our jolly little bay, and from the hill it's what I call mighty grand-like."

As Simon Aldridge could not bear to think of people being in trouble, much less to see them in tears, he cracked his whip, ostensibly for the purpose of urging on his horse, but really because he felt uncomfortable, and wished to divert the minds of his passengers, even though it were to draw their attention on himself.

"Who knows what trouble they may have had to make them all look so seedy-like? maybe it won't cheer them much when we get to the top of the hill;" and the bare thought of their being unhappy, and not being moved at the first sight of his village, made the honest fellow feel uncomfortable.

"Now, old Simon," he went on, addressing himself, "you are getting downish-like, and that 'ull do you no good at all. Come, I will whistle you a tune, and maybe it will cheer you, and the lot inside as well."

Saying which, he began to smack his whip, and to whistle in fine style.

How far Simon's surmises were true respecting the travellers, we leave it to our readers to imagine. Mr Melton's illness had been such as to leave him in a very low, nervous state of health, and if he took a retrospective view of his life, it could not be a very favourable one. His wife and daughter, on the other hand, had a gloomy prospect before them should the change not prove beneficial, and the head of the house fall under his illness. The two latter, however, had been too well schooled in Christianity, and had too firm a trust in the Divine promises, to despair or to murmur, whatever might be the future. And although, from a remark which the father made respecting his probable departure and past misconduct, together with the fatigue in travelling and their being in a strange place, a few tears were shed by them both, which Simon happened to see wiped away, yet, when he began to whistle, Rosa turned her head and saw him walking beside the car.

"Come," said she, in a cheerful strain, "I trust we all know where to look for help in every time of need; let us hope for the best, and leave the future to Him. Here's our driver; let's have a word with him." Saying which, she put her head to the open window and said, "So you haven't got to the end of your journey yet?"

"No, ma'am; but we shall be there in less than no time now. Only just stop till you get to the top of

this hill, and you will see the village and the whole bay; and if you don't say it's the prettiest place you ever clapt eyes on, my name isn't Simon."

Rosa was amused at the droll remarks which he made from time to time, and still more at the droll manner in which he expressed them.

"And do you know much of the village and neighbourhood?" said she, again addressing him.

"Well, I think I ought like, seeing as how I've lived there all my born life 'cept a month or so. Why, bless you, miss, our old rector sometimes says to me, says he, 'Simon, I baptized you at the font when a mere baby, I had you in my class at the Sunday-school, you were one of my candidates for confirmation, and I claim you for the Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"I should think you have got a very good clergyman, from what you say of him," said Mrs Melton.

"I believe you, ma'am. Why, all the people love him and his lady, and the young uns too. And although there's lots in the parish as don't do what he wants 'em like, yet I'll be bound there isn't one but what loves him at the bottom."

"Well, I hope you are one of those who try to do what he tells you," said Rosa.

"Why, as to that, I'm always trying, and yet I'm 'feerd I make a bad job of it after all. But rector says, says he, 'Simon, if you trust in your own strength you are sure to fall; but only pray to your blessed

Saviour and expect a blessing, and you will be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; and,' says he, 'Satan tries all God's people.' "

"I am pleased to hear you have got one that looks after you, and gives you encouragement."

"Look after us! I believe he does. Why, bless you, miss, often when he meets me he says, says he, 'Simon, remember your baptismal vows; remember your confirmation pledges; you have chosen the Lord's side as His soldier and servant to your life's end.' Who could help loving him when he does all this? It's so nice to think a body has one that cares about him, and looks after him like."

"And I trust he is comforted in seeing most of his people walking according to his teaching: you know, Simon, a clergyman needs encouragement, and nothing will do this more than by seeing a good work going on in the hearts and lives of his parishioners."

"He doesn't see so much as he ought to. Why, miss, as we are not quite at the top of the hill yet, and it's hard drawin' like, I'll tell you what I once did. I was down on the beach with a fisherman, in a very quiet spot like, right away from the village, and we had some words, cos he was so vexin'-like. So I got into a passion, and swore at him; when directly I had done so, I happened to turn my head, and there, sure enough, was our rector, sitting on a ledge of the rock close by, with his arms folded, and looking so sorry-

like. So when he found that I seed him, he come up to us, and says, says he, 'My friends, I am grieved to hear two of my parishioners quarrelling in this manner;' and then, turning to me, he says, says he, 'Simon, it grieves me still more to think that one o' my people, who has so lately been confirmed, should be heard to swear so profanely. If those who pledge themselves to be the servants of Christ do such things, what can we expect from others?' And then, miss, he made us sit down on both sides of him, and he talked to us till we were both a'most ready to cry, I assure you. Then he says, says he, 'I hope you both forgive each other, and are prepared to shake hands as a sign of friendship?' Why, bless you, miss, I was ready to do it afore it come to that; so I held out my hand, and says, 'There's mine,' and the t'other did the same; and, I assure you, we did give one another a gripe."

"And I hope you felt the happier after it?"

"Part like, I did. But the rector told us we must now ask forgiveness of God; but, first, says he, let me read you a few verses out of God's Holy Word. And then he read the fifth chapter of Matthew, out of a little Testament which he had in his pocket, about the Saviour blessing, and about forgiving one another, and such like. And when he had done that, we all knelt down on the sand, just under the cliff; and he did pray with us, my heart, that we might be led to see our sins and obtain forgiveness."

"Well, you have one indeed who cares for you," said Mrs Melton.

"We have, I 'sure you; and never did I think so before so much as I did that day; for when he was going away, he says, says he, 'I don't know what time you have to spare, but I will leave my little Testament with you, and if you have time read over the twelfth chapter of Romans together, and may God bless and forgive you both.'"

"How very good and kind of him," said Rosa. "He seems to be a true servant of his dear Lord."

"It was kind of him, miss. Why, he shook hands with us both so kind and fatherly-like; and when he had got about two yards from us, I heerd him fetch such a heavy sigh; and then he walked on with his head down, and his arms folded on his breast, as if he were so sorry-like. I watched him till he was out of sight, and felt as if I could have cried. And as we had nothing pertic'lar to do for the next half hour, we got the Testament, and read what he told us, and have been as thick as two Inkle weavers ever since."

Our travellers smiled at the good fellow's comparison, though what an Inkle weaver was they were at a loss to understand.

"How long has that been since?" said Rosa.

"'Bout six years ago. But I 've never sworn since then, and have tried to fight as a true soldier of Christ should."

“And do many go to church on the Sunday?”

“Lor’, miss, why almost all the parish goes : and quite a sight it is, I assure you, to see so many at church. And the rector is so earnest-like. Sometimes he says when he’s preaching, says he, ‘Read over the ordination service in your Prayer-books, and see what I have promised to do. Read your Bibles, and see what precious promises a heavenly Father has given to the world, and then tell me if you think I could help but be faithful and in earnest to discharge my duty towards you, and to serve such a merciful God. But you should hear him when he is speaking about the love of the Saviour. Why, only yesterday when he was preaching, says he, ‘Look to Calvary’s cross and see what the Son of God suffered for poor lost sinners. How can I gaze on such an awful scene without trying to win your souls for such a loving Saviour? How can you behold such a spectacle without fleeing at once to His arms who so loved you as to die for you?’”

“Ah, how many times have I heard such faithful sermons, and yet have turned my back and gone on in my old ways as before?” sighed Mr Melton.

“I trust you have now found Him at the last, my dear husband,” said his wife, “and that you will be kept by Him in peace to the end.”

“Blessed Father, I thank Thee!” breathed his daughter to herself.

By this time they had reached the top of the hill,

when Simon turned the carriage a little on one side, so as to give the travellers a view of the bay, and then coming to the window said—"Perhaps you would like to have a view of the village just for one minute, whilst the horse rests. There's the church peeping over the tops of those trees, that's the rectory between the opening there, and just round that corner of the cliff there was where the rector heard me and the man quarrel. That's what I call as pretty a spot as any in Old England."

"It is, indeed, a lovely spot," exclaimed the travellers.

"That's the inn," said Simon, pointing to a neat thatched-looking old house far below them, "and we'll be there in quick time now." He then mounted his seat and proceeded in his circuitous descent to the village below.

This was the first time in her life that Rosa had paid a visit to the sea-shore, or had seen the mighty waters which encircle her country. For, though her father had several times promised that they would all three go down there, and especially at times when he was more kind than usual, or had noticed the pale, distressed countenance of his wife or daughter, yet the promise had never been fulfilled. Leamington being within easy reach of Coventry, he had several times taken them to spend the day there. But that was about the limit of their journeys of pleasure.

Whilst the father continued to go on in his habit of drinking, their means would not allow of much to be spent in pleasure, or even in the little luxuries of life. As for you, poor girl, if your father had given up his evil habit, and had taken you and your mother a walk every day into the country, you would have been happy as the day was long, and would have been content to remain within sight of your own city's spires all the days of your life. Now, however, he was the invalid on whose behalf the journey was being taken; he was the party for whom so great a sacrifice of goods had been made. And all this was done without one reproach, without one selfish thought, without one murmuring expression. Generous, noble-hearted woman! Heaven's choicest earthly gift to man! Well might the wise man say, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

In a few minutes more they had arrived at the only inn which the village possessed, and which bore the assuming name of the "Queen's Hotel." Whether or not any such royal personage had ever been there we cannot pretend to say; but, as Simon expressed it, "It's as cosy a place, and as pretty a spot as anybody in this born world need desire, and not at all dear-like nathur."

After Mr and Mrs Melton had been assisted to the neat little sitting-room which had been prepared for them, and whilst the luggage and other little travel-

ling minutiae were being got down from the car, Rosa stood for one minute to admire the beauties of the place. Still further down was the beach, where a few fishermen were busy in arranging their nets; but whether this was after the toils of the day or in preparation for a night's fishing she could not tell. The scene was new to her, and interested her not a little. The sun was dipping below the waves, and some of his golden beams seemed to be reflected from each gently-heaving wave that was then rolling towards the shore. A few sea-birds were flying about what in her mind she had named, "Simon's corner," now and then dipping down to the waves for their prey; and the whole village and scene looked calm, picturesque, and delightfully beautiful.

Most of us generally attach to each new scene which we behold some incident or circumstance on which the mind has long been accustomed to dwell with delight; or else it calls forth to our mind's eye other scenes and associations with which, from our very childhood, we have been familiar. So was it with Rosa. During the few minutes in which she stood there, whilst the luggage was being collected together and taken in, the wonders which had been performed on the sea of Galilee rose up before her. The thought of the Saviour of the world walking on the sea—of His calming the mighty waves, hushing the wind and the storm—and of His watchful care and love for His disciples, came

into her mind. Delightful manifestation and emblem of His divine character! thought she. He still cares for His people, still hushes the raging storm, still calms the troubled soul, and now, as of old, says, "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace, and sin no more."

CHAPTER V.

THE FAITHFUL PASTOR.

"We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time ;

"Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

It may be thought by some of our readers that, as Mr Melton had so long been addicted to the habit of drinking, and had so lately reformed, he was, to say the least, running into temptation by going to the Queen's Hotel, even though it were but for one night only. So, at first, thought his wife and daughter ; but, on the present occasion, it could not well be otherwise. Lodgings had been taken for them by the landlord on condition that they suited the parties, but as the Meltons knew not whether they would be altogether such as their means and circumstances required ; and, not liking finally to engage them till they had seen them, there was no other alternative but to go direct to the Queen's Hotel for the first night after their arrival. Moreover,

since our first introduction to Mr Melton in the first chapters of this work, a twofold change had taken place in him. Physically, he had been brought down almost to the gates of death by his recent illness, and, therefore, to begin his old course again would have been at once fatal to him. Morally and spiritually also, for we need not here separate the two, as great a change had taken place as in his bodily health. Trusting, therefore, that He who had begun a good work in him would also carry on the same, and keep him in the hour of temptation, the wife and daughter yielded to circumstances and went there. Neither had they any cause to repent of so doing. There was much in Simon's artless manner and praise of his clergyman and parish to lead them to expect and believe that a faithful pastor presided over it; though they rather thought that his eulogium arose in part from his unacquaintance with the world and a love for his clergyman. But they found afterwards that the honest fellow's remarks were by no means exaggerated; and that the leaven which was leavening the whole parish had leavened also the Queen's Hotel. It is not the business or profession which ennoble the man, but the man that ennoble his calling. Neither is there any lawful business or calling which, in itself, is contrary to the principles and teaching of Christianity. And, in the present instance, the landlord and landlady of the Queen's Hotel were standing witnesses that, even in

their own class—wherein are to be found so many who not only encourage intemperance and spending habits in their houses, but hold out baits to lure men into them—it is possible to follow their calling and to adorn their Christian profession. From the long-continued watchfulness and faithfulness on the part of the rector but few of his parishioners were inclined to go beyond the strictest bounds of temperance, and of the few who felt disposed to go beyond them, the village inn was not the place where they were permitted to do so.

“No, no,” the worthy landlord would say; “our parson works hard enough to make his people good, and mine isn’t a-going to be the house where the good which he does is undone again. And if I can’t get a living without doing so at the expense of the poor wives and families of the village, why, I’ll pull off my coat and break stones first. No, no, it shan’t be said that Thomas Goodwin of the Queen’s Hotel has anything wrong at his house.”

On the Sunday his whole household might be seen at their places in church, and though the law of the land allows that, during certain hours of the day, liquors may be sold and drunk on the premises, yet there was no drinking at the Queen’s Hotel on that day.

“No, no,” the landlord would say; “I don’t care about letting any of my neighbours as can’t afford to keep a tap at their own houses, have a jug of ale for

their dinner, or any traveller that calls a glass to refresh himself; but no drinking at the Queen's on Sunday. I mean to have the rest-day as God has given me. And my neighbours may go to church twice, and then stay at home in the evening, or walk out with their families, and talk about what they've heard from the rector."

The Meltons therefore found it as quiet there as if they had been at a private house. However, on the following morning after their arrival, Rosa accompanied the landlady to a neat, little cottage, where lodgings had been bespoke for them.

"I hope you will like them," said Mrs Goodwin, as she opened the little wicket leading into a neat little flower garden in front of the cottage; "and I'm sure you may depend on the people of the house."

Everything outside bore the appearance of thrift and neatness. The rose, the jasmine, and the myrtle, climbed up the whitewashed walls, and beds of the scarlet geranium, chrysanthimum, and other flowers, adorned the well-kept little garden in front. And though autumn had already commenced, the whole presented quite a gay appearance. A hedge of laurustinas surrounded the whole in front, and also grew at the edge of the cliff, whilst, some half dozen yards below was the beach, which, for several nights in the month, was covered regularly by the tide. If the outside of the cottage was prepossessing, it was no less so

within. The little parlour into which they were first shewn had none of that cold, stiff, methodistical arrangement of furniture, which makes it appear as if meant to be looked at only. No stuffed squirrel sat staring at you from the little, low chimney-piece, with a nut between its fore-paws. No peacock's feathers bowed to each other over the looking-glass. No large sea-shells lay in the fender. No little round table stood up in one corner of the room, with a crochet-worked cover, and a flower-pot, containing a fuchsia, placed in the centre, with a few ornamental shells or stones placed around it. The round, large table in the centre of the room had not a tawdry, faded cover upon it, with a glass vase, containing a few flowers placed in the centre, and a few well-bound books and photographs arranged at equal distances around it. There was nothing of the damp, mouldy feeling in that little room—nothing of the iceberg appearance staring out from every article of furniture, as in some rooms, and which chills and freezes one in the hottest day of summer. Nothing of the kind. Everything looked as if intended to be used rather than looked at. An easy-chair stood on one side of the fire-place, and seemed to say, "Try me, for I'm very comfortable;" and a sofa stood under the wall on the other, and made a person feel inclined to have a lounge directly he saw it. A few Scripture prints decorated the walls, and an air of comfort pervaded the whole room. You might sit in

that little room, and watch the fishermen in their boats, or the sea-gulls flying about over the waters for their prey; you might hear the tide dash against the rocks below, or hear the chime of the soft sea wave as it came rippling on the shore, and feel as if there were no such things in the world as the struggles, the discords, and animosities of life.

The sleeping apartments bore the same appearance of cleanliness and comfort; and as the price of the whole was in accordance with the means which the Meltons had at their disposal, Rosa decided at once, and engaged them. In a few minutes, a cheerful fire was burning in the grate, and Rosa accompanied her landlady back to make preparations for taking possession of their new abode. Retired and unknown as the village was, an occasional party found their way thither. And, as such parties generally made the Queen's Hotel their quarters, the landlord had provided a one-horse car, a couple of Bath chairs, and several small oared-boats, for the use of his guests, or to be let out for hire. The services of his man Simon were, therefore, often being called into requisition—now, to drive a party to the station, and bring another back; at another time, to draw some invalid in a Bath chair along the sands or walks of the village; and sometimes, to row out to sea with a small party, or to superintend the whole, and keep them out of danger: on which occasions the worthy fellow was sure to

interest them by pointing out the beauties and other advantages of the place, or by descanting on the merits of his rector and landlord. On the present occasion his services were required to transport Mr Melton and their luggage from the hotel to their apartments.

"Very well, missus," said he, on being informed by Mrs Goodwin to that purpose, "it shall be done in less nor no time. But maybe, as I've nothing per-tickler to do just now, and the morning is so sunny-like, that the sick gentleman would like to be drawn about a bit to see the place: it 'ud freshen him up a bit like."

As such a proposition was by no means objectionable to Mr Melton or family, it was agreed to.

"So you are going to help us again, eh, Simon?" said Mr Melton, as he seated himself with difficulty in the chair.

"Yes, your honour. I hope none of you feel the worse for travelling. It's a pity to be stived up indoors such a morning as this, when everything out o' doors 'peers to say, 'Come out, and enjoy yourself.'"

"You must not go fast or take us far," said Rosa, "as my mother is also an invalid, and cannot walk very far."

"No, miss. P'raps the lady would lay hold behind; it might help her like. It isn't far to that there pint there, if she could walk as far; and the prospec' from there is really beautiful, I assure you," said he, point-

ing to the projecting cliff, which Rosa had already named as Simon's Corner.

As Mrs Melton thought she could accomplish thus far, they proceeded thither. It was one of those beautiful, bright days in early autumn, which are so different from those of any other season of the year besides. It was as though all nature were resting after the toils of the year, and were having a season of quiet enjoyment before falling asleep in the arms of winter. Here and there the cottagers were gathering in the fruits of their gardens and orchards; the rooks were flying about among the elms, that stood some half-mile up the hill; a robin would perch on a bough over head, and sing its plaintive song, and a quiet enjoyment seemed to reign everywhere.

"Well, this certainly is a pretty place," said Rosa, as they proceeded along. "Do you have many visitors here, Simon?"

"Not yet, miss. I don't think as how it is generally known; but when it is, there'll be more 'rivals, I assure you. But Lors, miss, I don't know what we should do if we had many more like. Why, we should want a coach then, or else one of them there homnibuses, to take them backwards and forwards to the station. And what master 'ud do with 'em all, or how I could 'tend to 'em, I can't think. So as the rector sometimes says, says he, 'It's all for the best.'"

As the thought had never entered Simon's head that

the hotel could be enlarged, or other lodging-houses might be built, and as the question of supply and demand had never troubled him, we will come to the same conclusion, and say, "How he could 'tend to 'em all, we can't think."

"There now," said he, as he turned the chair round, on arriving at the cliff, "from this pint here I don't think there's a prettier view nowhere."

"I fully agree with you," said Mrs Melton; "and do you know, Simon, we have named this Simon's Rock?"

"Well, now, I suppose that's from what I said 'bout the rector hearing me a fallin' out down there," pointing below. "Here it was, on that there loose rock, in that there corner, that he was sitting. I shall always think of him when I see that rock, I assure you."

"Have you any Dissenters here, Simon?" said Rosa.

"None at all, miss, I assure you. There are some in the next parish but one to this; and what they call their 'meetin' is quite an onsigthly place. It's a little, square-built, red-brick place, with the gable a frontin' the road, with a white stone up above, as says on it 'Ebenezer Chapel,' it says; but what that means I don't know. It quite spiles the village, I assure you."

"But Simon, they don't always build such places now. In towns some of their chapels are quite nice buildings."

“May be so, miss; but we don’t want none down here; for them as isn’t satisfied with our rector’s preaching wouldn’t be so with nobody’s else’s: that’s my ’pinion.”

“Well, I am glad you think so, and are satisfied. Only, take care and practise what you hear.”

“Ah, that’s the difficulty. But, as I was going for to tell you, one Sunday morning, ’bout two years ago, there come one o’ them men here as they call ‘travellin’ preachers:’ and what did he do, but went to every house, and asked if they’d let him preach there that a’ternoon? But there were none as would stand that sort of thing; for they told him as how our rector was so good, they wanted no new faces a preachin’ about here like. So, when he could get nowhere, he says, says he, ‘I’ll preach at the cross-ways, and you may come to me there.’ But when the time come, all the crowd went by him to church: so, findin’ as how nobody would stop to listen to him, he says, says he, ‘Well, as they are all going to church, I’ll go too.’ And he did. But, while people were in church, there were one or two as don’t go to nowhere like, waitin’ for him outside, as said they’d take him and give him a good duckin’ in the pond.”

“Well, I hope they did not fulfil their threats,” said Rosa.

“No, miss. The clerk told our rector what the men outside were going to do, and that the landlord at the

Queen's had refused to let him have 'freshment. So the good old rector followed the man directly, and says, says he, 'You must come home with me, and be my guest, as I fear you will fare badly if you don't.' Though I know master would soon a let him have something, if he'd a known as how the rector wished it."

"And what did the man do?"

"Lors, miss, why he war glad to go with the rector, for there was quite a crowd a-waitin' for him. All the good, quiet uns, like, had gone home; but a good many young folks, as likes a bit o' fun like, were stoppin' to see what the others 'ud do to him."

"Well, and how did it all pass off?"

"Why the rector come up with him, and he says, says he, 'My dear people, I am sorry to hear as how you mean for to 'sult this poor stranger. He came here to preach to you the word o' life; and though I always try to preach the pure gospel myself, yet you won't all come to hear me. Perhaps, therefore, he was sent with a message from God to those who refuse to listen to my voice. I, therefore, take him under my protection, and trust you will all go quietly home.'"

"That was kind in the dear old man. Why, Simon, I quite love your rector, though I haven't seen him yet," said Mr Melton.

"It war kind-like, I 'sure you. But, as I was goin' for to tell you, the travellin' preacher says to them,

says he, 'My frens, I fear as how we Dissenters don't alers go 'bout a preachin' for the sake o' preachin' the gospel, but to make more Dissenters; but,' says he, 'I shan't forget what I've seen an' heerd to-day. My frens,' says he, 'go regularly to church; for as long as you get such sermons as you've heerd to-day, you need not want nobody else.' And then they all 'spersed."

"And did it all end there?" said Rosa.

"Part like. They all went home, and the travellin' preacher went with our rector; an' because it began to come on a wet night, the rector made him stay at the rectory all night. But the rector's speech to them, and his kindness to t' other, so told on 'em like, that the men as was going to duck him turned over a new leaf, and have been to church ever since, one or two 'ceptions. And there hasn't been no travellin' preachers here since. Lors, miss, why, they'd soon see we didn't want 'em."

CHAPTER VI

LIVING TO THE LORD.

"O'er life's humblest duties throwing
Light the earthling never knew,
Freshening all its dark waste places,
As with Hermon's dew."

"WE have been hearing the praises of your clergyman," said Rosa that evening to the mistress of the cottage where they had obtained apartments. "He must either be a very excellent man, or else we have been hearing of him from one who evidently thinks so ; or both."

"He is indeed a good man, and dearly loved by most of his people. I suppose you have heard of him from Simon, at the hotel. He, poor fellow, thinks there is not another such in the world as his rector."

"What an original, kind sort of young man he is. I should think you might depend on him."

"You might, miss. And you would be surprised what a deal of good he has done in the parish. He was always a lad of sterling worth, and has quite an influence among the men of the place."

"So I could fancy. He has such a droll way of

expressing himself, and is so thoroughly kind-hearted, that one cannot help liking him."

"Our rector tries to lay hold of one or two leading characters in each sphere and station, and to get them to use their influence for the general good of the parish; and there are few that have been of greater service to him than Simon."

"That must be an excellent way of working a parish. It is like using its own material for the building up of a good cause."

"So I often think. But you must get Simon to tell you how the rector sent him to work, and what he accomplished. I daresay you will not easily persuade him, for he does not like to talk of himself."

Accordingly, two days after, when they had again engaged him to draw Mr Melton along the sands, Rosa put the question to him, but in such a manner as to make him suppose that they wished to hear still more respecting the good of the parish.

"I hear," said she, "that your rector has adopted the excellent plan of setting his parishioners something to do towards helping him in forwarding the good work of the parish."

"Yes, miss; he sometimes says, says he, 'Si'—— that is, he says to some of the people, 'You cannot help but influence your neighbours either for good or evil; and I want you to use a healthy influence for good;' and then he tells them how to do it, and

makes it appear so easy like that the people can't say no to it."

"You were going to tell us what he says to you on the subject; that is just what we want to hear; for I often think we might do more good if only we knew how to set about it."

"By all means," said Mr Melton; "for I think I have never used any influence at all except for evil, and I should like to hear what others in private life can do."

So after a little more pressing, Simon began:—

"You see, sir," said he, "being the only man at the hotel like, I have to go to meet the 'rivals, as master calls 'em, as comes by the train—like as how I met you. And sometimes they get me to drive out with them, so that I see a good deal of 'em like. And then, sir, you know my mother is a wider, as lives in the next parish but one, as I told you of, where the meetin' says on it, Ebenezer Chapel, it says; so that I have to lodge down here. I often tried to 'suade mother to come and live here, for she's getting old like; but it 'pears she don't like new places for to live in. For when I says anything to her, she says, 'Simon,' says she, 'I was bred and born here, and have lived here a'most all my lifetime, and I should like to end my days here;' so I don't ask her now to come, though she'd be more comfortable like, in my 'pinion."

Here Simon forgot the thread of his story, so after collecting his thoughts he proceeded:—

"So, besides being at the hotel I have to lodge down in the village ; and times when I've a-waiting for 'rivals that go 'bout picking shells and sea-weed and such like, I see a good bit like of the fishermen and the other men of the place. So the rector says to me one day, 'Simon,' says he, 'I've been a-thinking what a deal of good you might do in the parish.' 'No, your reverence,' I says, 'a poor young fellow like me can't do much good.' 'Simon,' says he, 'the amount of good we are able to 'complish doesn't depend on the money we possess, or on our being gentle folks;' and then he says, says he, 'Now, I'll just lay it before you, and leave you to judge for yourself.' And I 'sure you he did ; why, he made it 'pear as plain like as a pike-staff."

"Why, what did he say? Tell us all about it," said Rosa.

"Why, he says, 'Look here, Simon,' says he, 'your master has a good many visitors at his hotel, and you see a good deal of them. Now, they are, for the most part, rich, and it would not do for you to set yourself up as a teacher, but you can be obliging and kind ; you can set them a good example, and you can let them see that you are a Christian, and are trying to keep your baptismal vows. In fact,' says he, 'Simon, look at that sun how brightly it shines ; it doesn't tell you what road to take when you are travelling, nor say anything to you, does it?' 'No, sir,' says I. 'It only

shines, and leaves you to act 'cording to your own 'scretion. That's all, sir,' says I. 'Well, now,' says he, 'I'll read you what it says in the Testament, Simon—' 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'"

"Ah, what a light I have held out!" groaned Mr Melton. "Mine has been to light men down to eternal woe; but go on, Simon."

"Well, he made it all appear so plain like that I couldn't but agree to it; for, says he, 'Simon,' he says, 'I think you must admit that it is possible to use an influence there. And then,' says he, 'you see much of the young men and fishermen of the village. Now, I want you to bring them to my evening lectures, to my Bible classes, to church on the Sunday, and to do what you can to make them good men. It is 'stonishing,' says he, 'how much people might strengthen their clergyman's hands if they would only try;,' and he did talk so awful solemn like that he made a great 'pression on me, and, says I, 'If I only know'd how to act, I'm sure I'd strengthen your hands all I could; but you know how I fell out and swore, round the pint there!' 'And don't you remember how Peter swore and denied his Lord, and how holy and zealous he afterwards was? Read your Bible, and pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you, and you will know how to go on. Only let your light shine as brightly as you possibly can—

pray for the Holy Spirit to enable you to carry out your confirmation promises, and mind that the influence you use be a good one, and not for evil, and I ask no more,' says he."

"Well, and what did you say to all that?" said Mrs Melton.

"It 'pears to me, says I, no more nor what I ought to do, and no more nor what I should like to do, if I was only sure of carrying it out. 'Simon,' says he, 'you are sure to carry it out if you go on in dependence on God. You must pray for the Spirit's blessing and help, and though you may feel 'scouraged times like, you will be strengthened to the work. Come to me and I will pray with you and instruct you. It will not only help me, but, when the poor men like yourself have some one about them to remind them of what their rector tells them, and to set them an example, it strengthens them in good resolutions and ways.'"

"So it does," sighed Mr Melton, in a low tone, "and the contrary is also true, which I now find to my sorrow. Would that every one who is leading others into sin could only view their conduct from my present standing-ground; this would then be a happier world than it is at present!"

His wife and daughter, hoping that such reflections would have a salutary effect upon him, did not interrupt him; but, turning to Simon, Rosa said, "And how did you begin this good work, Simon?"

"Why, miss, you see the rector says to me, says he, 'Now, Simon, you have been 'edicated to the Lord at baptism, and you again stood on the Lord's side at confirmation; I shall therefore claim you for the Lord's. And as we all have 'sponsibilities, we must not shake them off us. I am sure you will not flinch from your duty, but begin and go on right noble and well, as a true soldier of Christ should do.' And then, when he parted from me, he says, says he, 'Simon, I will give you a word or two out o' the Bible which you must remember—'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'"

"A very nice and comforting motto indeed," said Rosa.

"I 'sure you it is, miss, and the rector explained it so nice-like. He says, says he, 'You must think over what God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have done for you, as it tells you in your Catechism and Bible. Think over all your Christian privileges, and the happy state into which the true believer is brought and for ever kept by the power of God. You will then have such joy in the Lord as shall be a great help to you in your walk through the world.' But he sets lots of others to do the same. And it is so cheering like to see how kind he takes us by the hand, listens to our complaints, and 'courages us like. And I 'sure you every one feels happier in doing good than bad."

"And I trust you are working and fighting as a true soldier and servant of Christ," said Mrs Melton.

"Part like. I'm sorry I can't do more. There's them in the parish as does more than me. But the rector sometimes says, says he, 'Simon, look at the stars on a clear night. One shines brighter than another, but they all shine. And you must be like them; if you can't shine brighter nor all around, you must be content to shine as well as you can.' But I fear sometimes I don't give no light at all."

Now, that wasn't right of you, Simon. You might have told your audience how many of the rougher characters you had been the means of bringing under the rector's influence,—of one or two whom you had taught to read, and had encouraged them in habits of industry and sobriety. You might have told them how you supported that poor, infirm mother, saving up all the odd money that "'rivals" gave you, to buy her comforts and to drop into the missionary-box; how many buckets of water you carried during the year, and how many other little kind acts you did for those who could not help themselves. You might have told them what quarrelsome people those were with whom you lodge when you first went there; and how you gradually won upon them by degrees, till they laid aside, first their wranglings and quarrels, then went to church with you on Sunday, then consented to your reading a prayer every night, till the husband at last

regularly read the Bible and had family prayers, and became a communicant at church. You might have told them how, on one occasion, an old gentleman whom you rowed out to sea with, seeing a book in your pocket, asked you what it was, and on hearing that it was a New Testament, consented to your reading a few verses. You could have told them how, often when he had engaged you to row out, he kept the boat steady amidst the gently-heaving waves, whilst you read to him about the loving Saviour calming the waves of the Sea of Galilee, or some such miracle of Christ; and how, from your quiet, unobtrusive remarks and Christian example, he was led to read for himself, and to become a true disciple and follower of Christ also. But you erred on the right side, Simon; and we commend you for your lowliness of mind, and the humble opinion which you had of yourself. Go on, Simon, doing your Master's work, leading others to the sanctuary, and otherwise strengthening your clergyman's hands. And when your gentle rebuke of, "Well, now, I reckon that 'ull bring you sorrow at the last," or the encouragement, "to watch, to wait, to pray," or, "to repent, believe, and expect a blessing, as our rector tells us," shall be heard no more, and when you and your rector shall have gone to your reward above, may there be found in every parish many who shall continue to influence aright, and to train up souls for immortality and God!

CHAPTER VII

THE WAVE BREAKS ON THE SHORE

“Wearied with life’s journey,
With its cares and fears opprest,
How glorious the sunshine
Of our promised rest !

The toil is all forgotten, the tears are turn’d to smiles,
The distant angel-music our weariness beguiles.”

“That deep, mysterious ocean,
Whose tideless waters roll
With solemn requiem music
Before his wondering soul.

He hears its mystic voice, and feels its waters chill and drear,
But the light of home beams steadily, and his spirit knows no fear.”

FOR the first two days after their arrival at the sea-side, Mr Melton appeared somewhat to rally ; but after getting back to their apartments from the airing he had taken in Simon’s chair, and during which the conversation took place as recorded in the last chapter, he became suddenly worse. Once more he was confined to his bed, and more than ever he realised the blessing of having a Christian wife and daughter near him. The village doctor was called in, who at once pronounced it a hopeless case, and all their worst fears were realised.

It was Sunday afternoon, the first after their arrival, and Mr Melton was hardly expected to live a few hours more. The bells were chiming for the service, and throngs of villagers were quietly wending their way to the sanctuary of God. A long string of school children were proceeding in pairs from the school-room, accompanied by their pastor and his staff of Sunday teachers. The sea murmured pleasantly down on the shore—the cattle browsed in their little picturesque meadows, which meadows, for form and beauty, are only seen in sea-side or hilly districts—and all nature seemed to enjoy the Sabbath of rest which God has mercifully bestowed on the world.

“My dear girl,” said Mrs Melton, “your father is dozing now, let me persuade you to go and lie down, and I will call you when he wakes, should he be worse; you look quite wearied out.” •

“My heart is too full to sleep, dear mother; but, were I sure how long he would doze, I think I should feel more refreshed and comforted by going to church and joining in her beautiful prayers and services.”

“Well, go, my child: perhaps, should it be necessary, Mrs Rayton will run and call you if you sit near the door.”

Mrs Rayton was their landlady; and, as she agreed to do so, Rosa proceeded to church. By the time she got there, the bells had ceased their chiming; one or two stragglers were hastening along the road leading

to the church, and the organ was playing an overture prior to the commencement of the service. One of our authors remarks that "heaven begins on earth to the Christian ;" and of all the foretastes of it, there are none so truly delightful to the child of God as the precious hours of public worship. The soft pealing notes of the organ—the song of praise ascending up from an assembled congregation—the responses of the people, sounding like a quiet murmur through all parts of the sacred edifice, seem not only a part of heaven's employment, but a part of heaven itself. Did many a poor wandering child of humanity, who now experiences the evils of sin and the pain of deep-seated remorse, but know the blessedness which the true believer in Christ realises in this respect, we think he would not rest till he could feel truly restored, and could enter with him into the full enjoyment of his Christian privileges. Some may object to the above remark, and say, that "nervous temperament has much to do with it ;" but if there is one thing above another that is calculated to calm, to soothe, and refresh the whole man, it is the service of prayer and praise of the sanctuary. So thought Rosa, as the organ ceased playing, and the old rector commenced the beautiful liturgy of our Church. The congregation was large, and the church appeared quite full, except a few sittings near the door, where she took her place. She felt wearied in body, sorrowful in mind, and heavy at heart when she entered ; and

although the tears would still force themselves to her eyes, if for one moment she thought how soon she would be fatherless and her mother a widow, yet as the service proceeded she felt comforted and refreshed. Many a time had she noticed how exactly the wants of each individual member of the congregation were expressed in the liturgy; and often, when she heard the words, "That it may please Thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived," had she thought of her wandering parent, and prayed for him. Or when the words, "That it may please Thee to succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation," were prayed by the minister she had thought of her trial, and prayed with fervour, "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord." But never had the prayers seemed to express her wants and feelings more than at the present time. And when the minister solemnly prayed, "Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate," and the "Amen" went up from the congregation, she felt that she, too, had a share in those prayers, and that the fatherly goodness of God would rest upon her. And when the prayers were over, she rose from her knees "sorrowful, yet rejoicing," heavy at heart, but comforted. Religion with her was not something which she merely turned to when in trouble, but a principle and a life. A covenant-keeping God was

her stay ; and she knew that He who had forgiven her, received her as His child, and called her with a heavenly calling, would also keep her to the end ; for she had a Saviour's promise, " No one shall pluck you out of my hand." The sermon was faithful, simple, earnest. The language was evidently that of a scholar, but so simple that the poorest might understand ; and the preaching was that of one who cared for his people, and who felt that he must hereafter render an account. To stop to eulogise the preacher would be out of place here. Let our readers listen to any eloquent, educated, and faithful pastor, and they will have an idea of the preacher in the present instance. Like a true father in Israel, and a faithful pastor of Christ's flock, he exhorted, comforted, and taught ; and Rosa left the sanctuary of God feeling that it had been to her a refreshing resting-place, and that a few of the rills " whose streams make glad the city of our God " had also descended upon her.

The school-children have sung their evening hymn, and are dispersing from the school ; their Sunday teachers are also shaking hands with their beloved pastor, as he bids them good-bye at the school-gates, and says some kind word of pastoral advice, or blessing, at parting ; and among the rest, and last, our old friend Simon.

" Well, Simon," said his clergyman, " though ' faint, yet pursuing ' still, I trust ? "

"I hope, sir. I've been wonderful comforted and encouraged like to-day."

"I am pleased to hear it. Remember the words, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'" And seeing that the honest fellow had something to say to him, he said, "What is it, Simon? anything to say to me?"

"Master had some 'rivals this week as have gone to lodge at the Raytons'; and the old gent 'pears as if he wouldn't live long. And as the ladies might not make bold like for to send for you, I says to myself, says I, 'The rector ought to know.'"

"So, you have told me, Simon. I will call at once, and walk with you as far as you go that way."

On arriving at the cottage, he saw Mrs Rayton, and tendered his services to the sick man should he wish them; and, as the landlady left her pastor to inform her lodgers of his arrival, the door of the chamber being open, he heard a female voice reading the seventeenth chapter of St John's Gospel. At times the reader would be interrupted by a low voice, which he guessed was that of the sick man; and then the reader would proceed as before.

The Meltons received the rector's visit with joy. And to the invalid, his visit was more especially acceptable; for, since he was one who had had great experience in the pastoral work, he was the better able to suit the nature of his visit to the state and condition of his hearers. In the present instance, after a

long and faithful conversation, reading, and prayer, he departed, promising to call again on the morrow, or earlier if desired. They found also, on their further acquaintance with him, that Simon's reports were by no means exaggerated. And Rosa felt thankful that, although they were far from home, and in a strange place, her father would have, in his last hours, the ministrations of one who felt for them a faithful pastor's care and solicitude.

It is Tuesday afternoon, two days after the Sunday above alluded to, and the good old rector has seen the dying man twice since that, his first visit. The day had been dark and lowering, and almost unusually sombre and quiet even for autumn. In the cottage of the Raytons a solemn scene is taking place. Mr Melton is lying, calmly and quietly, on his bed. On one side of him are kneeling his wife and daughter; on the other side, the landlady and clergyman. The latter has just been administering to them the Holy Communion, and is now repeating the final blessing. The wanderer has been restored; the sinner forgiven; the alien reconciled and adopted; and at last, though for the first time in his life, and though dying, he has been fulfilling his Lord's dying command, "Do this in remembrance of me."

The rector has been gone more than an hour; but all have been comforted by his visit. The grasshopper has for sometime been a burden; the wheel is

broken at the cistern, and the last sands are running out.

"My dear wife and daughter," falters the dying man, "I am sure you both forgive the wrongs I have done you?"

"I am sure I can answer for both," said the affectionate wife, kissing him.

"Let this be your comfort, that I die happy, a sinner saved by grace; and let the Divine promises to the widow, the fatherless, and the believer be your stay."

Again there was a pause. The wheel hardly turned round—the silver cord was being loosed.

"My father, I trust you realise the presence of your Saviour and your God now?" said Rosa.

The sands run out more rapidly, and he falters, "Yes, a precious Saviour. I was the chiefest of sinners; but He is able and willing to save—to—the—uttermost"—

"All who come unto God by Him," finished his wife, after a pause.

"Hark! what is that?"

"It is the tide coming, dear father, and the music of the waves you hear."

A pause once more. The church clock struck four, and sounded like the knell of death to those watching and praying beside that bed.

"Is it peace, dearest?" said the wife.

"Perfect peace—in Jesus," was the whispered reply.

Rosa turned her head towards the window. The clouds seemed to break a little ; and the tide came rolling in, as each wave broke with a gentle murmur on the shore. The scene was a suggestive one. "The tide is setting in," thought she, "and my father is now on the wave of time, which is about to break on the shores of a better country ; and, O Father, I thank Thee, he will be landed in safety !"

She turned her head towards the dying man, who again opened his eyes. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"—said she to him, and paused.

"I will—fear no evil—for—thou art—with me—thy rod—and—staff—they comfort—me," her father with difficulty concluded. A last smile passed over the countenance. The sands have run out, the wheel has stopped, the cord is loosed. The wave has broken on the shore, and a wandering child has reached his Father's home.

There is something very solemn, very humbling, and of a very lonely feeling, in the first minutes of bereavement. As we look upon the countenance so lately beaming upon us with looks of love and tenderness, and see all so changed and different, we feel that another cord has been severed which bound us to earth. Our position feels new to us, and the path before us looks dark, uncertain, cheerless. Sorrow and grief come in all their bitterness ; and we almost wonder, in

future days, how we bore up during the last hours of parting.

So it was with Rosa. This was the first time she had seen death; and the first thoughts that she was fatherless were those of bitter poignancy. But remembering that she had still one parent who would now more than ever need her care and support, she bore up as well as she could, and devoted herself to comforting her mother. As she gently led her from the room into the little parlour, both feeling lonely and sorrowful, the sun, which had not been seen all day, appeared for a few minutes between the opening clouds in the west. A flood of sunshine for one minute entered the room and smiled upon the mourners, and then the glorious orb gently sank to rest behind a dark cloud which seemed to rise up from among the distant waters. The bereaved ones took the passing sunbeam as a smile from their covenant-keeping God, and were comforted.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOPE IN ADVERSITY.

"When courting slumber,
The hours I number,
And sad cares cumber
My wearied mind,
This thought shall cheer me,
That Thou art near me,
Whose ear to hear me
Is still inclined.

"My soul Thou keepest,
Who never sleepest
'Mid gloom the deepest.
Through light above
Thine eyes behold me,
Thine arms enfold me,
Thy word has told me,
That God is love."

READER, has the grim messenger ever entered your family, and stolen away those who were near and dear to you? Did you ever start from home with some beloved one, in the hope that change of air would re-establish the health, and strengthen the feeble frame; and then, after a few days, see the loved one become more feeble still, and die before your eyes? Was the

beloved one left behind in some far-distant spot, where, perhaps, you could hardly hope ever to shed one tear of affection upon the grave? If so, then you know that it is worse even than when such a one departs from you when at home, and amidst familiar objects. You know how, in each yard of the journey home again, your thoughts dwell upon the little incidents which occurred, and the conversation you had with the lost one when you last passed over that spot. The refreshment-room you entered; the waiting-room you stopped at; the platform you paced with the dear one; the objects upon which some passing remarks were made—all are for ever sacred in your eyes—all bring back to your mind the beloved one, with whom they are thus in so slight a manner associated. And when you pass up your own street, or enter your own doors for the first time after your sad loss, how different are your feelings to what they were when you last passed over the same ground! The vacant chair, the place at table, the seat at church, the books and things that were used, all remind you of your loss, and carry back your thoughts to that far-distant grave. Had the loved one died at home, you could then have realised your loss; as it is, you fancy you hear the merry laugh, the loving call, or the foot-fall of the dear one's feet echoing through the house, and that, in another instant, the door will open, and the loving eyes beam down upon you: you listen; you turn instinctively to

the door of the room ; your thoughts wander to the far-distant grave ; you grow restless, and feel that you must follow your thoughts, and go and watch there. The writer has felt all this, and ten thousand times more than these feeble words are able to convey an idea of. Perhaps, reader, you have felt the same. If so, you can sympathise with poor Rosa and her widowed mother. True, Mr Melton was not the good husband and father he ought to have been : he, nevertheless, stood in these relationships to them ; and, as such, he was dearly loved by them.

Although they were in a strange place in that village by the sea-side, yet human kindness came to their help, as it ever does when there is need of it, and they met with many friends. The kind rector helped them, visited them, comforted them. Their landlady rendered them service. The host and hostess at the Queen's Hotel did what they could to befriend them. And last, though not least, poor Simon. . . .

The mournful ceremony is over. A dim twilight, together with the help of a bright fire, lights up the room at the Raytons' ; and the two mourners sit, lonely and sorrowful, together. The kind rector and his wife have just left them, having tried to persuade them to make their home at the rectory during the little time they have yet to remain. The waves roll murmuringly on the shore, or dash against the rocks below. The wind blusters around the old church

tower, and then mournfully sighs itself away among the cottage chimneys, and keeps up an eternal concert with the waves. A few black clouds move heavily across the now darkening sky, as though they, too, were hastening away to their rest. Rosa gets up, and walks to the window, to bid farewell to this sorrowful day. Poor girl! All seems sad, both within and around you. The robin appeared sad, as he twitted on the rose-tree before the window, gave one plaintive note, and then flew away to rest. The wind appeared sad; the waves were sad; those dark clouds looked melancholy and sad. But cheer up, mournful one! That bright evening-star, which sheds its rays across your path, speaks to you of hope, and bids you love and trust. It reminds you of a Father's love, of an eternal home, of happiness and rest for ever. When you are far away from that sad sea-shore, and you see your native spires again pointing you heavenwards, you will look on that bright star, and think of the far-distant grave. And when years have rolled away, and the journey shortens, and the day fades away, and the twilight comes, you will look up at that friendly star, and go on trusting, loving, praying to the end. It is strange that associations of hope, and love, and trust are always connected with stars. But so it is, nevertheless.

It is ten days after the funeral, and the widow and daughter are on their return to Coventry. Simon is

driving them back to the railway station, and has just stopped at the top of the hill overlooking the village. He had walked up the hill beside the horse as before, and he now pauses for a minute or two, ostensibly for the purpose of giving the horse a rest, but really that the mourners may have one last look at the spot which contained the remains of one so dear to them. "Maybe their 'arts are too full like to say, Simon, stop for one minute at the top o' the hill; but I ain't lived all these years not to know that much like. But they must not look too long, or it will make 'em sadder nor ever."

The station-master remembers the "rivals," finds one is missing, looks at their dress, and guesses the truth. He looks after their luggage, gives it in charge to the guard of the train, finds them a suitable carriage, and does all in a quiet unostentatious way as though he divined nothing of their sorrow. The last passengers were getting in, and the last portion of luggage being placed in the van, when Simon went up to the carriage which the mourners occupied alone. "Perhaps it would be a comfort like to know that the grave is 'tended to: I 'sure you I'll look after it, and keep it as nice as if it war somebody belonging to me," said he. The travellers gave him their thanks, the train moved on, and the little station was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WEDDING.

"Breathed in her ear. The ring is on;
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye one."

"WHAT! from a funeral to a wedding?" say some who scan these pages. Yes, dear reader, it is the way of the world. Births, marriages, and deaths are the three great events in the history of her citizens, of which the state takes especial cognisance; births, marriages, and deaths stare you in the face whenever you take up a newspaper; birth, marriage, and death are the three most important events in a man's life, and what you see continually taking place around you.

If you go to church where a large congregation is assembled, you see in one pew a bridal party, and in another a family in mourning. If you go along the streets, you meet the hearse and the mourning-coach; then a party proceeding to church to get-married; and a little lower down the street you see a poor fellow pulling a long face and the doctor's bell at the same time. This mixture of contrasting events which are

occurring on all sides around us, every one must have noticed ; but in a religious point of view, not only instructive but very pleasing thoughts are suggested to the mind by the different institutions of Christianity which are closely connected with the above events, and which take man as it were by the hand as he journeys along. The world has often been compared to a stage—life to a drama—mankind to the performers. But although every one must take his part in the great drama, and the whole play may appear entirely of the world worldly, yet it is delightful to see many of the performers dedicating themselves to great ends on their first entrance upon the stage—stepping aside at times to do a nobler and greater work than what the mere casual observer would behold—leaving at times the rest of the performers in the world's play, to refresh themselves by true spiritual food, and to drink of the streams of life, till they have performed their part, and they drop quietly off the stage at the last. Thus does the Church of God, like a true nursing mother of her children, take hold of her members in infancy, bless and consecrate their marriage, feed them with heavenly food as they pass along, and then, when their work is done and their journey ended, they pass through the gate of heaven, and join her other happy and glorified children above.

Like many others in the world, Mr Melton called himself a Churchman, though he rarely ever entered

into one. This, however, did not prevent him from providing accommodation for his family in their own parish church of the town. A pew, therefore, had been taken, in which he rarely, his wife frequently, and his daughter always, might be seen at the time of divine service. Near to where they sat was also another pew, which was occupied by a family who came as regularly to church even as Rosa. Among the rest of the family was a young man of gentlemanly appearance and good looks, who, for several years before Mr Melton's death, had noticed Rosa's regular attendance at church, and her devout behaviour when there. Though strangers to him, he could see that Mrs Melton was an invalid, and that her husband was not so temperate as he should be. He, therefore, was not long in guessing Rosa's troubles, and sympathised with her accordingly. Pity, it has been said, generally leads to love; but in the present instance, if there had been no pity at all in the case, Hanmore Lawson could not help but love Rosa Melton, girl though she was. So much kindness to her parents, which was seen in little trifles even at church and on the way, such constant attendance at the house of God, such reverence of spirit, such lady-like behaviour, and last, though perhaps not least, a handsome form and face, how could poor Hanmore help loving her! "The child is father of the man," said he to himself one day, as he watched her along the street from the church, "and I suppose this is true of the

other sex also. If such be the case, that girl will make a treasure of a wife, and I will win her if I can." As for Rosa, the family before spoken of seemed to belong to a much more opulent class, and their appearance and dress spoke a higher sphere than what she moved in ; so that she did not expect the young gentleman could fall in love with her, neither did she hope for such a result. She looked at those young ladies whom she supposed were his sisters, and thought how rich they were, how happy they looked, and how nice it must be to have a brother to go out with ; and then, on looking at that individual, she found that his eyes were resting on her. Vexed with herself for letting her thoughts wander in this way, even in the sanctuary, she called back her wandering thoughts to a sense of her duty, and joined in spirit and heart in the services of public worship.

But it was all in vain, Rosa, for you to resolve that you would banish all thoughts of him from your mind ; that he was six or eight years your senior, and therefore could not be thinking of you with any degree of preference ; and that you were very silly for entertaining such a thought. You know that it did not succeed. Little as you had seen of him, you know that, in your heart of hearts, you would prefer him to any one else ; and though, perhaps, it was very right of you to make those resolves, yet you could not but know that he admired you very much, to say the least. Why also did you

think of him at times when at home and alone? And why did you feel unsettled, as if something was wanting, if in case he happened to be absent from church? We say, Why? Your resolutions were partly in vain.

Let not our readers suppose that Hanmore Lawson and Rosa Melton went to church to look at each other; they had too much good sense to do this. They went to church to worship God; and if, during some part of the service, their thoughts wandered on such a subject, our fair readers must not be hard upon Rosa, for it is what they have done lots of times, however much they may protest against it. There need be no false sentiment or prudery on the subject. Woman's mission is to get married: for this she was sent into this world; for this she ought to be educated; for this she ought to try and fit herself. And if two young people prefer one another, what is that to the world? They themselves either have preferred and been preferred, or hope to be in that happy position. And to be that loved one's companion, to cheer him under the mortifications and trials of life, to make his home happy, to spend with prudence and economy what he has toiled and worked hard for, to meet him with a smile as he comes in jaded and weary from the world, to train up the "olive-branches" in such a manner that they may be ornaments to the world here, and thrive in a more genial atmosphere hereafter—such, O woman! is your mission here, and a glorious

one it is, too. No false sentimentalism need make you deny it. But try and fit yourself for fulfilling it nobly and well. True goodness and worth are generally appreciated ; and, if they are not always, let the blame rest on the other sex.

Hanmore Lawson had lost both his parents when he was quite a child, and had been brought up by a distant relative. A few hundred pounds had been left him by his father, a portion of which was to educate him and put him apprentice ; the remainder he was to receive on coming of age. He had therefore been apprenticed to a ribbon manufacturer in Coventry ; an excellent Christian man, and one who always treated him with kindness and consideration. At the time when our narrative first commenced, he had been out of his time several years, and was then a chief assistant in his master's warehouse. And as Rosa, whom for years he had watched and loved, was then approaching womanhood, he was hoping ere long to claim her as his wife. As yet he knew but little of her, except that he had found out where she lived, and what was her name ; but he had seen enough to convince him that she was worth winning if he could, and he hoped ere long to make her acquaintance.

Whilst these things were planning in his mind, he missed the family from church. The second Sunday passed, and no Rosa came to the house of prayer. The third went by, and still the sitting was vacant, or filled

by another. All this time Rosa had been, at first, nursing her father down at the sea-side, and afterwards watching beside the sick-bed of her mother, whom the death of Mr Melton had quite prostrated. During this time the lover had been in doubtful anxiety respecting the Meltons. He had gone by the house and had seen the blinds down and no one stirring about; he had made inquiries of some of the people near, but could gain no information, except that the inmates had gone away; he had questioned others, but could gain no clue to their whereabouts. However, on the fourth Sunday the neighbouring pew contained its accustomed occupants, and the widow's weeds and the dress of the mourners told their own tale. He seemed now to be drawn towards them more than ever; and as he saw poor Rosa's lip quiver, and then a tear moisten her beautiful eyelashes, he longed to comfort her, and to take his place beside her as her husband and protector for life. Some time after, he knelt beside her at the Holy Communion,—an incident which he hoped was significant of the time when they would again kneel there together to pledge themselves to one another in holy matrimony, and after that come together, as man and wife, to the Holy Communion as they were then doing. Who knows but what similar thoughts passed through her mind? Let us not judge them harshly, dear reader: true, the place was holy, the service was holy, and the event which was being celebrated was a

solemn one ; but love is also holy, and when entered upon with consideration and honourable intentions, it is doubly so.

During the following winter, Hanmore Lawson had several times met Rosa, and the more he saw of her the more he loved her.

She and her mother had just finished tea one evening in early spring, when a double knock was heard at the door ; and presently their little maid-of-all-work announced Mr Lawson. Rosa's heart beat violently as the question arose in her mind as to what brought him there at that time. Some trivial errand was alleged by him, but he had hard work to make it appear like business.

Come, Hanmore Lawson, that poor excuse which you have made as the cause of your visit won't do. If that was the real cause of your going there, what made you appear so nervous? Besides, those pauses look very awkward. You have been there an hour, and are none the forwarder. However, the mother begins to guess your errand ; and as you don't seem to conclude your business and go, she leaves the room for one minute.

The two hearts beat faster and harder than ever.

.

But what are the thoughts that pass through Rosa's mind? The incidents of her past life rose up before her like an immense shifting panorama ; and she sees a wife kneeling beside her little one, and raising her

tearful eyes to heaven in prayer for a loved, but intemperate and sinning husband and father. The scene changes, and she beholds a young girl leading along the streets a half-intoxicated and dissipated man; whilst the wife and mother, once young and handsome, but now prematurely gray and spirit-broken, leans her head upon her folded arms and weeps. Later on, and she sees a beautiful bright sun just dipping beneath the western wave, and sea-birds flying about in the full enjoyment of life; a few white fleecy clouds dot the heavens, brightly tinged by the rays of a setting sun, and a lofty church-tower rears its head in the midst of a quiet, lovely village, and seems like a nursing mother to the houses which cluster around. But there is one dark spot in that happy picture, and that is, a widow and a fatherless one in deep mourning weeping over a newly-made grave. Yes; and over the grave too of one who had mined his health by intemperance, and whose sun had gone down whilst it was yet day. The scene changes once more, and for the last time. Two beautiful spires rear their lofty heads into the clear-blue sky. Crowds of worshippers throng to the sacred temples; and among these a poor widow leans sorrowful and sad upon the arm of her only daughter, and they proceed thither also. She sees them again treading life's pilgrimage together, with no earthly guide and protector near to guard them from the frowns and injuries of a cold and wicked world, and to provide for their wants

by the way. But sad and lonely they pass on, cheered only by the thought of the rest they are going to, and by the promises of One whose word was never known to fail. The curtain falls. She lifts up her heart to God for direction ; and her decision is made.

Listen, Hanmore, for your answer.

"Mr Lawson, you are not entirely ignorant of what was for years a grief and trouble to me, and therefore you cannot blame me when I tell you plainly that I will never marry a man unless he be a decided Christian. I have no reason to doubt your being such, but the contrary."

"I think, Miss Melton, we have known each other sufficiently long to be satisfied on that point ; though it would appear very pharisaical in me to say that I come up to your standard of Christianity. But inquire about my character and conduct, and if you find any blots on them, then I will submit to my fate. Should they, however, prove satisfactory, tell me, what may I hope ?"

Now that beating heart fairly thumped again. Her handsome countenance was first pale, then flushed, then pale once more. Her beautiful eyes turned on him one look which spoke all that he needed, and there is a pause.

A female head rests for one instant on a manly breast ; the two hearts beat in close proximity ; and two loving heaven-bound pilgrims feel happy in each other.

Time flew by fast and rapidly with Rosa that spring and summer. It was so delightful to have one with whom she and her dear mother could advise; one who would take her quiet walks in the cool summer evening; one who would walk with both to church on the Sunday and accompany them to the Lord's table. So it was Rosa! There is not a purer delight upon earth than that which the society and companionship of two loving and devoted hearts afford each other. And sad, sad is the wound which is inflicted when two such lovers are torn asunder!

Autumn has come round once more. A company of swallows are twittering upon the tops of the houses round the "big church-yard," or pursuing each other round the Coventry spires, which seem to rise up high as ever into the clear-blue sky. A car drives up to the door of St Michael's Church; the party alights just as the worthy vicar reaches the door. The beloved pastor greets them, wishes them much blessedness, and they all enter the church together.

It is Rosa's wedding-day. This day she becomes the wife of Hanmore Lawson.

The ceremony is over: the clergyman addresses them solemnly and kindly, as a pastor should, and again wishes them all the happiness the world can bestow, and the party drives off. As the car rounded the corner of the church-yard, Rosa caught sight of the fine old tower and spire. The apostles looked down

upon her benignantly, and seemed to bless her. The spire pointed far up into the clear-blue sky, and reminded her of heaven and its blessed inhabitants. A tear came into her eye, and she thought of the grave by the sea-shore.

Such is the experience of life generally. Even when the heart is the most delighted and happy, an anxious, foreboding thought will cross the mind. When the sky is clearest, and the sun shines brightest, a cloud, however small, will be seen. And even when we clasp the long-wished-for prize, and the nearest and dearest becomes our possession ; at times such as these a sigh will heave the bosom, or a tear moisten the eye of the happy one. Perhaps it is well that it should be so.

It is not very poetical, to say the least, to begin a chapter on love and matrimony, and then conclude it with a paragraph on business, but our readers will bear with us for once, as some may naturally ask with what prospects did Mr and Mrs Lawson begin their married life ?

In the ribbon manufacture there are men who engage in the business in different ways, according to their means and capital, and who consequently occupy a corresponding position in the mercantile world. There is, first of all, the manufacturer, who buys his silk first-hand from the silk dealer, and either manufactures it into ribbons in his own factory, or gives it out to others to make into ribbons at their own homes. There are also others who buy the material second-hand from the

above-mentioned, and who keep a small factory of looms at their own houses, where the ribbons are made. These are manufacturers on a small scale. They cannot afford to keep much stock, but generally sell out every year at least, or else they must close for want of funds. But although one small stock must go before another can take its place, when times are good they get a good living, are enabled to save a little fortune, and even to rise to be manufacturers on a large scale. The last class that we need mention here are those who have the silk weighed out to them by the first-mentioned. They then take it to their homes, where they have a few looms of their own, or which they have hired, and where they occupy a few "hands." When the goods are made they take them to the giver-out of the silk, and receive the sum agreed upon for their manufacture. Thus there are three classes of master manufacturers, who occupy a corresponding *status* in the business world. Besides these there are the poor labouring artisans themselves, who work at the large factory of the first, the smaller one of the second, or the small shop of the third, or in their own single loom at their own houses.

Of the different classes of masters above mentioned, Mr Melton belonged to the second. But from his own neglect of business, and habits of intemperance, he had never risen higher than a manufacturer on a small scale. Having, however, but one child, he had given

her a good education, and, so far as home expenditure was concerned, they had made a respectable appearance, and had had a comfortable home. The only drawback was the father's intemperance; and that, all must confess, was quite sufficient. But although Mr Melton had continued to make enough money to keep his family in a comparative degree of comfort during his life, theirs was merely a hand-to-mouth existence. No provision had been made for contingencies, or for supporting his family in case of disease or death. Rarely do men who are given to drink act with such forethought or consideration for their families as to make provision for them beyond their own uncertain life. And often had it been a matter of anxious consideration to both Mrs Melton and her daughter, as to what they should do in case of a long-continued illness or death on the part of her husband. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," Rosa would say to her mother on such occasions; "we both know where to look for, and to expect help, and I will work these fingers to the bone before giving up in despair."

Mrs Melton would kiss her daughter, and thank Heaven for such a gift; but she also knew that that gentle, delicate, loving frame was not made for the hard, stern difficulties of life, and would soon give way if pinching want, and long-continued anxiety, and hard manual toil were her lot. As Providence ordered it, however, Mr Melton did not linger long in illness; but

his loss was bitterly felt, for, besides being dearly loved, he was also the stay of the house.

It has been mentioned before, that so unprovided was he for any contingencies, that a loom had actually to be sold in order to afford him a change to the sea-side. And when all the expenses of the funeral were reckoned up, they had barely enough of money to pay them. Besides which, they had a small factory of looms and a well-furnished house. However, for some few months after the loss of the husband and father, the wife and daughter together, from their knowledge of the business and the parties with whom Mr Melton had dealt, were enabled to carry on the business; though how long this could have lasted is uncertain. But the following spring Rosa became engaged, as we have seen, to Hanmore Lawson. He, thoroughly understanding the business, was enabled to help them till such a time as Rosa became his wife, when he would then carry it on in his own name. On his part, also, at the time of marrying Rosa, he was enabled to bring some four or five hundred pounds in ready money; so that, what from a comfortably-furnished home and a small factory of looms on one side, a knowledge of business and five hundred pounds on the other, and loving and devoted hearts on both, Hanmore Lawson and his wife began the world with bright prospects, and, humanly speaking, with every appearance of ultimate success. It is true, such a beginning, to many of our readers, would appear

contemptibly small ; but it must be remembered that we are not writing about the affairs of one of our merchant princes or cotton-spinning lords, but about those of people who have to fight life's battles with the greatest odds against them, and who, if they rise to affluence and ease at all, must do so after many a hard struggle with the difficulties which beset them. However, with a fair start, small though it was—with patience, perseverance, and determination, Hanmore Lawson and his wife did not despair of success. There was moderately good health—a firm attachment to one another—true Christian love, and zeal, and trust—earnest activity, prudence, and forethought ; and where these are, what else is needed to insure happiness ?—what more is required to expect success ?

Go on, then, bride and bridegroom, pilgrims through life together. May your journey be as bright and pleasant as the sun that shines over your head ! You have made a good beginning—may the end be success !

May it be the same with you also, O reader !

CHAPTER X.

THE PHASES OF LIFE.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

WE must now pass over some nine or ten years, or we shall weary our readers by too long a story. We have seen Rosa the wife of Hanmore Lawson, and both happy together. For a time, therefore, we will leave them.

In one of the fashionable streets in the west end of London, a number of carriages and other vehicles, from the handsome yellow chariot and pair of grays, of the millionaire, to that of the hired cab of the stipendiary curate, are rolling along. "Money makes the mare to go," says one of our homely proverbs; and, on the present occasion, one might almost tell the respective wealth of the parties by the progressive rate at which they sped along. The ladies put their heads to the window of the large yellow carriage to look at the one-horse cab, and wondered if its occupant was bound for the same destination; and the footmen, sitting behind,

in their warm, comfortable, light-coloured great-coats, looked down on "cabby," as he blew his fingers, and whipped his horse to keep pace with them. But it was of no use, "cabby,"—"Money makes the mare to go." Besides, you have only the curate. Be content with your pace and position. The popular physician, in his brougham, was rattled along by his well-fed bays, and was envied by the occupants of the enclosed, one-seated thousand-a-year carriage, which, for a time, tried to keep up with its more dashing neighbour. But it would not do. Fall in there; you are all bound for the same place, and will all meet together at the last.

A crowd of ragged, half-starved urchins mounted the palisades, or stood on the pavement in front of the house where the respective vehicles set down their occupants, and made their cutting remarks on flunkeydom. From the stylishly-dressed "tiger" of the millionaire, to the boy in buttons perched up beside the coachman, none of these grandees escaped criticism except when the inexorable "Move on there," of the policeman put the whole rabble to rout for one moment. Only for one moment, we say; for soon they drew together again from the different quarters in which they had been dispersed, and were as severe against "calves" and "buttons" as ever. The wind blustered down the streets; the lamps cast their flickering glare upon the damp flags of the pavement below; a poor, miserably-dressed woman, with an in-

fant at her breast, moved the pity of the passengers who hurried by ; a blind fifer, with a soldier's old coat on, and led down the gutter by a little bonnetless girl, fified away as if his life depended upon it ; whilst lower down the hardy German was grinding out the Old Hundredth Psalm from his barrel-organ.

It is a regular November night, and more comfortable within-doors than in the damp, foggy streets ; let us therefore follow the occupants of the string of carriages into that mansion which they have just entered. A large, splendid double drawing-room is almost crowded by a party of guests. Magnificent chandeliers are suspended from the ceiling, and light up the room to perfection. The furniture is grand, the rooms are grand, the light dresses of the ladies look grand, and everything looks grand together. Wealth and beauty crowd the rooms, and the whole arrangements of the household shew great taste, and give an idea of enormous wealth. Another room contains refreshments of various kinds, whilst a third large room is also set apart for the use of the guests, and if the latter are not comfortable and amused, it is not the fault of Mr and Mrs Mayberry and family. The music strikes up, and the dance commences. The quiet ones, and those more advanced in life, retire to lounge and chat, or play at cards, according to their tastes, whilst a few sit round the room watching the mazes of the dance. Amongst the latter was the Reverend Harvey Waterland, curate

of one of the fashionable churches in the neighbourhood, which the Mayberry family attended. He was the only son of a quiet, religious, well-to-do family in the country, had taken high honours at the university, and bid fair to be one of the popular preachers of the day. Consequently, he was frequently invited out to parties by the more wealthy members of his flock: and, though he would often have rather remained at home in his own quiet rooms than accept the invitation, yet, as he could not always refuse, and thinking also that it was a pastor's duty to join the social gatherings of his people, he very frequently went, unless some pastoral duty of a more important kind prevented him. Indeed, at the Mayberrys he was a frequent visitor, being constantly asked to join their own private family at dinner. He had often told them that he would rather come in such a friendly way than to their large parties; but on the present occasion they were not to be put off. "You shall be as quiet as you please," said Mrs Mayberry to him one day during the week, as he happened to be passing the house when she was stepping into her carriage; "I shall think I am doing something dreadfully inconsistent with my profession if my clergyman refuse to attend."

So on the night in question we find him among the rest of the company assembled at the mansion of the Mayberrys. Finding, however, that he could not be

quite so quiet as he could have wished, he determined to make the best of it, and to leave at an early hour. He therefore took his seat in one corner of the room, and watched the parties engaged in the dance.

After the two first dances, during which he had amused himself by chatting first with one party and then another who were in want of partners, Miss Sophia Mayberry took her seat beside him.

"Don't you dance, Mr Waterland?" said she, as she seated herself; "really this is too bad, when in the last I saw three ladies in want of partners."

"I thought you knew that I had given up dancing sometime before I took orders."

"And will nothing tempt you to break the rule for once to-night?"

"Not even the pleasure of dancing with you; and if anything in the world would induce me that would."

A slight blush swept across her fair countenance. "You *are* proof," said she, "and no doubt you are right. I am engaged to Sir Harry for the next dance, and I see here he comes to claim me."

Taking the arm of her partner she went off wondering whether dancing was really wrong.

The music again paused, and Harvey Waterland watched Sophia and Sir Harry as they paced up and down the room together, and thought her by far the most lovely creature in the room. Whether others would agree with him in that respect is not for us to

say ; at all events he thought so, and that was quite sufficient. Some admire a dark complexion, and others a light one, like Sophia Mayberry's ; but the mind and disposition are the principal things. And in these respects few would be inclined to object to Harvey Waterland's opinion of Sophia. Of moderate height and frame, with rich tresses of auburn hair, gray eyes, and a healthy, glowing countenance—such was Sophia Mayberry. Being also kind and amiable towards all, affectionate and good-tempered, accomplished, and occupying a good position in the world, we can hardly wonder at the general admiration which people bestowed upon her. As for Mr Waterland, she was in his eyes everything that he could wish, and often had he turned again to admire her fine figure and good riding, when he had met her on horseback in one of the parks.

“May I claim you as a partner in the next dance?” said Sir Harry to Sophia Mayberry as another polka was about to commence.

“Not this time ; there is Agnes Moreton without a partner, and I shall not dance in the next.”

“Then you will consider yourself as engaged for the one following,” said he, as he walked away to choose another partner.

As Sophia sat fanning herself and watching the parties dancing, she was joined by Harvey Waterland.

“I may now ask you the same question which you

lately put to me, and say, Don't you dance this time?" said he, as he sat down beside her.

"No; I am glad of a rest, and the room is getting so warm. Do you object to dancing, Mr Waterland? or, in plainer terms, do you think it wrong to do so?"

"In some cases, decidedly so; in others, I can't say that I do."

"But if it be wrong in one, why not in all?"

"Well, I don't know that I have seen anything wrong in your dancing to-night, nor in any one's else. Every one must judge for himself in this respect.

"Then in what cases do you think it wrong?"

"I should think it wrong, or, to say the least, very inconsistent with my profession as a clergyman, were I to do so. Before the party broke up I might be sent for to visit a dying parishioner; and how could I go from the whirl and excitement of a dance and discharge that solemn duty in a becoming spirit? But taking no extreme view, suppose I were to dance to-night, on Sunday when preaching, would not you, as also others, be picturing me waltzing round the room with my arm round some one's waist, and think how very inconsistent it all was?"

"And yet I have seen clergymen dance."

"That may be: I have also seen the same. And I have also heard people express themselves very strongly against it."

"Yes, and so have I, and have defended them by saying, that if it was wrong, or if they thought it to be so, they would not have danced at all"

"That was very considerate of you. But, since there are so many who condemn dancing altogether, which do you think most becoming for clergymen to do—to follow the Apostle's example and precept, "Wherefore if meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no more while the world standeth;" or to bring a reproach upon their profession by engaging in such an amusement?"

"I fear this is anything but a pleasant evening to you, for in the other room there is card-playing, which I suppose you also condemn for the same reasons?"

"I do: but you are paying yourself a poor compliment if you suppose I am not enjoying myself. The pleasure of seeing you, and being where you are, will always insure that."

"What a pretty speech! wouldn't you have said the same to any other lady in the room?"

"You know me too well to think so. But come, I don't think you have had any refreshment; will you allow me to escort you to the refreshment-room?"

She took his arm, and they both proceeded there together. And some time after, when Sir Harry came to seek her for the next dance, as it was near the time

when Mr Waterland had ordered his car to be at hand, he quietly left the house and went to his bachelor lodgings.

The following Sunday, none of the party who heard him preach could think but that he had done right by giving up dancing, least of all could Sophia Mayberry. What say you, O reader, upon the subject?

CHAPTER XI

THE REFUSAL

"None is poor but the mean in mind, the timorous, the weak,
and unbelieving."

"None is wealthy but the affluent in soul, who is satisfied and
floweth over."

MR MAYBERRY was engaged in business in a large wholesale way, and was considered one of the most successful and wealthy men in the trade. And certainly, to judge of the style in which he lived, the education which he had given his family, and the appearance which they made in the world, people could hardly be wrong in supposing that he was either a very rich man, or else a very dishonest one, by living by a system of fraud and false appearances. One or two shrewd, careful business men, who were still content to ride to their office in the morning and back again at night in one of the city omnibuses, gave each other a knowing look as Mr Mayberry was driven by them in his own private carriage, and said, "It is not all gold that glitters" or that, "Some one will rue for that," and such like ominous expressions: but still the Mayberrys gave their parties, and made as great an

appearance as ever. Of course, these were only the uncharitable expressions of the envious world. His bills were still discounted at the bank: his clerks were well paid; his house kept up in style: and if there were a few over-cautious ones who did not care about selling goods to him, there were others who would; what did he care? Such was the state of affairs at the close of the year 1856.

Mrs Mayberry was a gay, worldly-minded woman, and equally extravagant with her husband. Sometimes, it is true, her husband grumbled at the household expenditure: but then she retorted, that "if he kept horses, and carriages, and men-servants, they must do things in accordance therewith; besides, their son was in one of the 'crack' regiments, and their three daughters were nearly all grown up—and as they should like them to marry well, for their sakes they must keep up an appearance."

"Well, my dear, then I don't care how soon you get them married well," he would reply; and so things went on.

It has been before observed that Mr Waterland, the curate of the church where they attended, was a frequent visitor at their house. Gentlemanly, popular, and possessed of a well-stored mind, it was so pleasant to have him as a companion for the evening after the business of the day, or to hear him sing with his daughters. When, therefore, they were not going to

parties themselves, or giving one at their own house, the Mayberrys would often get Mr Waterland to join them at their family dinner, and spend a quiet evening with them.

As for the daughters, they seemed to care less for the gaieties and pleasures of life than their parents; and this was especially true of their second daughter, Sophia. When she could visit some of the poor of the district and read to them, or take a class at the school, and then have a good gallop in the park, and after that see Mr Waterland at their own quiet dinner and sing a duet with him, then she had spent one of her happiest days. And she might often be seen carrying some small parcel of clothing or a little basket containing nourishing food for some poor invalid of the place. No doubt, therefore, Harvey Waterland expressed the true feelings of his heart when he told her on the evening of the party, that "the pleasure of seeing her, and being where she was, would always insure his enjoyment!"

Some few weeks after the large party at the Mayberrys', as related in the last chapter, Harvey Waterland was again dining with them in a friendly way. He had done so several times since then, and once or twice had met Sir Harry Shelford there, who seemed to pay Sophia very marked attention. Whether any engagement had taken place between them he was unable to tell; but judging from the manner in which she received them, he thought not. "No, Sophia," said he to him-

self, "I don't believe you care for him a bit ; and I don't think you are the one to barter away your happiness for a mere name and position." Still the bare possibility of her doing so caused him to feel uncomfortable. However, on the night in question no one was there but himself, and Sophia met him with her usual smile and cordiality. The dinner passed off very agreeably, and soon after wine and dessert had been brought in, the ladies retired to the drawing-room, leaving Mr Mayberry and Harvey Waterland by themselves. "Now," thought the latter, "I will see how matters stand." Politics were discussed, and other floating gossip of the day was talked over ; but still the question of the evening had not been broached.

"You don't get on with the wine much," said Mr Mayberry, as he emptied one of the decanters into his glass, and rang for the butler to replenish it.

"My profession and income will not allow of my drinking much wine, and, therefore, you see I am moderate, both from principle and necessity."

The servant brought in more wine, and left the room again. When he had gone, Mr Waterland began :—

"I have some business to do with you to-night, Mr Mayberry, and there is no more fitting time than the present, whilst we are alone."

The latter slightly changed colour, wondering, no doubt, what business he had with him. But filling his glass again from the fresh wine, he said—

"That is something new for one of your profession, I should think."

"I can answer for myself that it is ; and, therefore, I hope to be successful."

Mr Mayberry made no reply ; and, therefore, he proceeded :—

"You have known me now for some time, and I have seen a great deal of your family. I have formed a great attachment for your daughter Sophia ; and want to know if you object to my making her an offer of marriage."

Mr Mayberry appeared somewhat relieved when he heard what the nature of the business was ; and before his guest had concluded his sentence, several thoughts rushed through his mind, the burden of which were as follows :—"I wonder what Sir Harry means to do?—She is a pretty girl, and sees a good deal of company.—They must all marry well."

"Well, I have no objection, so far as character and person are concerned," said he, seeing that Mr Waterland was waiting for an answer ; "but what are your means ?"

"What you, sir, will no doubt consider small, but what I consider quite sufficient to justify me in making your daughter an offer."

"And may I ask what they are ?"

"Well, I have three hundred a-year, besides what I obtain from my profession, which, to say the least, is

worth from a hundred to a hundred and fifty a-year, even on the supposition of my continuing a curate."

"And is that all?"

"It is. For the lady's sake I could have wished it had been more; but that will enable us to live quietly and respectably."

"You have not tried the fresh decanter, I think. May I ask your opinion of it?"

Mr Waterland filled his glass, and drank a part in the manner of a "connoisseur." "It is very good," said he, as he set down the glass.

"I should think it is," said his host, with a slight expression of pride and contempt mingled together. "It costs me more than three hundred a-year in that wine only. When I ask you to dine at my house, Mr Waterland, I ask you as the clergyman of my parish, and not as a husband for my daughter; and until you have an income sufficient to keep her in the style in which she now lives, I should advise you to think no more about her."

"It was partly because I hadn't, that induced me to make the proposal. For, in the first place, I know she does not care about such splendour; and, in the next place, I know she would consider my income sufficient to enable us to live comfortably."

"At all events, I, her parent and guardian, do not; and that, I trust, is enough."

"One word more and I have done. Suppose my

income larger, might I ask what fortune would you give your daughter?"

"I am not prepared to answer that question; so for the present we had better drop the subject. Will you take any more wine?"

"No, thank you."

After such a discussion and termination as the above, it is not to be wondered at that both parties felt rather unsettled on their joining the ladies in the drawing-room. The father was moody and irritable; the lover felt pained and disappointed. However, he determined that the ladies should not perceive it. He therefore sang a duet with Sophia, turned over the leaves of the music for her sisters, chatted with Mrs Mayberry, and even started politics with her husband. But it did not succeed. The mother perceived that something had transpired between them; and Sophia thought Mr Waterland less cheerful than usual,—a conclusion that was perfectly correct, for never had she appeared to him more lovely and engaging than on that evening. And the thought that he had been rejected by her father, and that she was now further off from him than ever, made him appear sad, notwithstanding his resolution to shew nothing of it. He was glad, therefore, when ten o'clock came, and left, mortified and cast down.

"Mamma, what has happened between Mr Waterland and papa?" said Sophia to her mother that same night on entering her room to bid her good-night.

"Why, my child, has anything happened?" said she, evasively.

"Come, I am sure you know; do tell me, there's a dear mamma."

Mrs Mayberry could not resist the winning ways of her daughter, so she said, "Perhaps I ought not to tell you, but Mr Waterland asked your papa's consent to his making you an offer."

"And papa refused?" said she, fixing an inquiring look upon her mother, as if to read in her countenance the whole truth.

"Of course, he did, my darling girl."

"But why 'of course?' dearest mamma. I see nothing in Mr Waterland to object to."

"Not personally, and professionally perhaps not: but then he is not rich; and, besides, who knows what Sir Harry Shelford means to do?"

"But surely, mamma, you don't think I would marry him?"

"Why not? he is rich, has a title, and could keep you in style."

"And you would let me sell my happiness for these? No, mamma, I will not marry Mr Waterland without the consent of you and papa. But I would rather marry him, if he had only his curacy to depend upon, and I had to turn governess, than marry Sir Harry, with all his riches; and I think it cruel in papa not to consult me before refusing Mr Waterland's suit."

“Come, my dear child, don’t distress yourself, but kiss me and wish me good-night.”

There was no sleep for Sophia that night. Perhaps it was the same with Mr Waterland.

CHAPTER XII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

"The storm was laid, the winds retired,
Obedient to Thy will;
The sea that roar'd at Thy command,
At Thy command was still."

THE year 1857 was an eventful one to many, being the year in which one of those great commercial crises took place which generally involve so many families in ruin. It was one of those years which prove to the world that there is a tie connecting nation to nation, and family to family, and thus forming one compact whole; and that if one member suffer, the whole body will more or less suffer in the end. Like as when a stone is cast into a pool of water a succession of concentric circles are generated, which go on increasing and expanding till they break one after another on the water's edge: so in the great and mighty multitudes of people who throng the earth like a flood, if a disturbing element be cast in their midst, convulsions are produced which go on in their mighty throes till the uttermost parts of the earth are more or less sensible

of the shock. In that year, families that had all their life long lived in ease and comfort, were reduced to comparative poverty and want; whilst others who had for years been toiling and slaving till they had reached a position of independence, were suddenly hurled down from the eminence to which they had manfully and nobly fought their way. The first symptoms of the great commercial crisis which then took place in the world appeared in America. Onwards and onwards it spread, like some mighty ocean wave, till England, Holland, France, and even China and Australia became involved in the general calamity. Banks stopped payment; firms were broken up; houses that had long possessed a name of trust and respectability were proved to be rotten at their foundation, and to have carried on business by a system of fraud and false appearance; whilst even wealthy and long-established houses received at that time such a shaking as they have not yet got the better of. And many an honest, well-to-do man is even now spirit-broken and ruined from the calamities which came upon him in that eventful year.

It will be remembered that we have passed over a period of nine or ten years, and that we left Rosa the happy wife of Hanmore Lawson. Since that time to the period of which we have just been speaking, she had been blessed with four children; and the beginning of the year 1857 found her as happy a wife and mother as any that lived in Coventry. Her husband loved her,

and was beloved in return ; and, no doubt, she thought him one of the best husbands in the world. Their children were blooming and healthy. Business had increased, and their circumstances were improving every year. A larger factory had been taken, more looms set up, and a greater number of hands employed. And although the expenses of housekeeping had necessarily gone on increasing, yet, by great care and frugality on the part of the wife, and earnest perseverance and attention to business on the part of the husband, the stock of manufactured goods that had been cleared out every season had gone on increasing in value from the £500 worth of the first sale, to that of £1700 of the last. This, thought Hanmore Lawson and his wife, was a handsome sum to be able to call their own ; for they had only to exercise judgment in purchasing the raw material, and caution in choosing a safe customer for the manufactured goods, and then they might safely consider such an increasing sum their own. And in these respects judgment and caution were exercised. Few understood the nature of the silk business better, or could turn out more valuable goods than Hanmore Lawson ; and as to his customer, who could doubt but that the wealthy city tradesman, Mr Mayberry, was as safe as the Bank of England ? He had always sold to him from the first ; and if he wanted the money the bills were discounted at the bank ; if he did not they were always discharged at the end of the usual three

months' credit. He had just received the money for the last sale of goods that was effected in the autumn of 1856, and, as was said before, it appeared to them a large sum. And as fortune, or rather, as some would say, Providence seemed to smile on them from year to year, and as Rosa had been very ailing during the winter, the affectionate husband determined that now spring was advancing, his wife and children, together with his mother-in-law, Mrs Melton, should have a change of air for a few weeks.

It may be argued by some, that people who have their bread to get should not think of indulging in "changes of air," visits to the sea-side, and other such expensive habits; that the poor who live all their lifetime in the same spot are as healthy and well as those who are always running about to different places; and that such ideas of "need of change of air" are the fancies of the rich, who have plenty of money to spend, and, therefore, the poor and middle-classes should not imitate them. There is, perhaps, much truth in these remarks. However, life was not given simply to work and toil—to eat and drink and sleep, and then to pass away and be no more. And though this, unfortunately, seems to be the lot and condition of many, yet few of our readers will confess but that, though such may be the stern necessities of our life, yet there should be some bright spots to relieve them, and a glorious termination of hope and Christian peace should end the whole. To

enjoy life ourselves, and to strive to make life happy to others around us ; to set before us the great ends of our existence, and to live for them ; to banish from our minds sorrow and anxiety by the enjoyment of true Christian peace and blessedness ; and evermore to keep our minds fixed upon the precious rewards which Christianity holds out as our possession at the last ; such should be our rule of action—such should be the blessings which we should seek to extend to others. And the higher, the purer, and the more refined the sources are from which we seek to draw enjoyment and pleasure, the greater will be the degree of happiness which we shall experience. Hence we think few will confess but that, in the case of Rosa—who had striven with her husband, had fought by his side the hard battle of life till they had gained their present position of comparative independence, and who was a true pattern of what a Christian wife and mother should be,—we say, few will confess but that her husband was right in saying that she and her mother and family should leave the bustle and business of Coventry for a change of air ; and few will wonder when both mother and daughter chose a visit to the grave by the sea-shore.

One fine morning, therefore, in the month of April, after having set all his hands to work, and made every provision for his absence during the next few days, Hanmore Lawson started with his family to the sea-

side parish in the west of England, before spoken of at the beginning of this work.

Some people have a habit of thought which dwells much in the past ; whilst others seem to live in and for the future. With the former, there is hardly a circumstance or an incident of their lives but what serves to remind them of some past event ; whilst, with the latter, the mind is continually dwelling on the future before them. "The last time I passed this way, such and such events transpired." "This time last week, or last year, I was with so and so." "The dear creature that has passed through that door-way, or trodden upon that spot." Such are the thoughts which are continually rising in the minds of the former ; whilst the "may be's" of the future are those which seem most to concern the latter. We are strange creatures. And although many men, by their improvident habits and reckless enjoyment, appear to live only *for* the present, yet we most of us live a great deal *in* the past or the future. There may, perhaps, be short intervals in our lives when we really have not a thought of the past or a concern for the future, but when we really live in the passing moments, and enter into the full enjoyment of the present. At a happy family party, when the members have for some time been separated ; or at the sacred services of the sanctuary, which to the Christian are generally delightful ; or at times when the body and mind revel in the enjoyment of health

and spirits—such seasons of real and present life usually occur. But ask the man of business, who is hoarding and saving; the anxious and care-worn, the fond parent, and even many who have no family at all, what the thoughts are which chiefly occupy their minds, or what is the chief concern and end for which they are living; and you are sure to find that the remorse of the past, or something still in the future, is the mainspring of their actions and thoughts. True it is, that present necessities often goad a man on to strenuous and continuous exertion, and present wants must be supplied, which, therefore, demand immediate attention: but still our cares, and our enjoyment of mind—our spring of action, and its rewards, are those which belong, in a great measure, to the past, or are reserved for the future. One wishes to save a fortune, that he may marry, and live in style; or, if married, that he may retire from business, and end his days in peaceful retirement. Another wishes to save a fortune for his children, or to see them comfortably settled in the world. A third, that he may attain to some honour on which he has long set his heart. So it was with our fathers; so it is with us; and so it will be with our children who come after us. There is much that is laudable and praiseworthy in such-like thoughts and provision. But still it sometimes appears strange that we should draw so little enjoyment from the actual present. To the Christian, also, there is

much that is calculated to afford him pleasure and enjoyment in the contemplation of the past and the future ; and such meditation cannot be otherwise than salutary in its effects upon him. In his case, however, the present enjoyment is not always so great as it should be from such meditations upon the past. The leading and preserving hand of Providence, which has been so abundantly seen in the past—the fulfilment of the Divine promises, which we have so often experienced, should afford us present peace and happiness, and should lead us to trust, to love, and to adore more fully for the future.

Of the two classes above mentioned, Rosa belonged to the former. As the train from Coventry to Birmingham hurried along its iron road, and the last tops of her city spires disappeared behind the railway banks, her mind recurred over and over again to the last time she had taken that same journey, or to her sad return. Then she felt lonely and sad, and the future appeared very dark and uncertain ; but now she was a happy wife and mother, loving and beloved by both children and husband. Her dear mother, also, who was sitting beside her, and petting first one and then another of her grandchildren—true, her head was beginning to bleach, and old age was fast telling upon her—yet how thankful was the daughter, as she looked at her only surviving parent, to think that she had been enabled by God to make the latter

part of her pilgrimage so smooth and free from care. Truly could she say with Jacob of old, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." The waiting-rooms, the platforms, the occasional porter whom she and her mother remembered,—all served to remind them of their former trials, and to make them thankful for their present mercies.

Once or twice they had heard from Simon, to the effect that he was still fulfilling his promise to them when parting. But as this is best expressed in his own words, we will here give the contents of his last letter:—

"September 23, 1855.

"MY DEAR LADIES,—It 'pears sometimes oddlike to me that I should write to you, because you are strangers almost. But then I sometimes say to myself, says I, 'Simon, you know what trouble they were in when they were down here, and what you promised about 'tendin' to that there grave;' and then the rector says, says he, 'Simon, you should do to others as you 'd wish 'em to do to you;' and I know if I 'd a father lying buried a sight-like away from home, and a body had promised to 'tend to the grave, I should like to hear about it. Why, then, my ladies, I feel like as if I must write, and so I do now. We have lots of 'rivals down here in summer, and in my opinion they needn't wish for a prettier spot; but I don't want too many,

as it 'ud spoil the place, and, besides, it makes our dear old rector more work. Lors, he does look after them as if they were belonged to him. He is getting old now; why, only just think, he's ten years older nor when you were down here. What we shall do when he's gone, nobody knows; but I do hope when the Good Shepherd takes him to the fold there will be given another faithful rector to look after us. Nobody in the parish ever wants that time to come, though it 'pears selfish-like to want him to be from his rest so long. Since I wrote last I have got married, and she's such an excellent wife that I have got! I hope we shall do as the rector told us when he married us. He says, says he, 'My good people, I hope you will bear each other's burdens, and travel as fellow-pilgrims to heaven. No doubt I shall be there before you, but I hope to welcome you hereafter;' and such a lot like that we couldn't help but try and be good when he talked so like that. But I mus'n't write longer, for I shall tire you.—I am, my dear ladies, your humble servant,

“SIMON ALDRIDGE.

“*P.S.*—Well, now, only just think I've written all this without telling you about the grave. It looks as nice as any one in the place, and I mean for it as long as I can 'tend to it; for as sure as my name's Simon, I will keep my promise.”

"Now, my dear, for your old friend Simon," said Mr Lawson to his wife, as the train slackened its speed to call at the little station at the end of their journey. "I shall return to Coventry again after seeing you comfortably settled, but I hope to make the acquaintance of your worthy friend."

"Yes, and I shall be quite disappointed should the driver of our conveyance prove any one else besides," said his wife.

It did not happen to be Simon, but the next day they were not long in finding him. Since they were last there, circumstances had also improved with him. Although he was still of considerable importance at the Queen's Hotel, he had, nevertheless, a piece of land, and kept his cow and a few sheep. He had also a boat of his own, which was in frequent demand in the summer; his cottage was well furnished; his wife and he were still of as great help to his worthy rector as ever. His wife, who had been housemaid at the rectory, was in every way a suitable one for Simon; and as Rosa had brought several pieces of Coventry ribbon for her acceptance, the whole family were soon in great favour.

Before leaving Coventry they had engaged the same apartments which they occupied before. And as Mrs Melton and her daughter looked around the room at old familiar objects,—the chair in which the loved one sat, the room in which he died, and at the sea, whose

waves still sent forth their musical chimes as they did ten years before,—they could not but feel how wonderfully an Almighty Hand had led and blessed them since their last visit there. To walk over the old spots where they passed with the invalid ten years ago—to visit “Simon’s rock,” and stand on the exact spot where they listened to his story and the praises of his rector—to visit the churchyard and talk to their little children and grandchildren of him who lay in that neatly-kept grave, and of heaven where the once sinful but restored and forgiven one had gone to,—such was Rosa’s and her mother’s delight. Who has not felt the power of association? The spots where the dear and departed one has trodden, the views which he or she admired, and everything at all connected with the loved one,—all are sacred to the bereaved and sorrowing ones. This is what we have all felt, and can therefore enter into the feelings with which Rosa and her mother visited the, to them, hallowed spots by the seashore.

They had been there a month, and the last day of their stay had arrived. It had been a happy visit to them. Their health had improved—the good pastor had visited them from time to time, and conversed with them of heavenly things—they had visited the grave, and felt more than ever that bond which unites the living saint with the glorified ones, viz., “the communion of saints”—and with thankful hearts they were

now looking forward to their leaving again. Their nurse had gone with the children to spend the afternoon with Simon and his wife, and Rosa was that day expecting the arrival of her husband, who was coming to take them home.

"In three more hours my precious Hanmore will be here," said the affectionate wife, as she stood with her arm round her mother's waist, looking through the window down upon the waves below. The sun was still shining high in a bright May sky, and smiled on the waters of that beautiful bay. The waves gently pursued one after another till they broke murmuringly on the shore, the birds sang, the sea-gulls flew about the rocks or dipped down at the waters for their prey, and all nature smiled and seemed happy.

"Do you remember our standing here on the last evening of our stay, and how lonely and sad we felt after losing dear father?" said Rosa to her mother, in order to cheer her, for she knew that her thoughts were dwelling on the past.

"I do, my child, and also your remarks upon the passing sunbeam that then smiled upon us. You have ever been my brightest sunbeam, and my home and my earthly pilgrimage would have been dark and solitary without you."

"No, my dear mother; that Sun of Righteousness would have caused other beams to smile upon you."

"He would, my child. All our precious gifts are

only as it were the sunbeams of His love, and ere long we shall enter into the full sunshine and blessedness of His presence."

"A comforting hope, my dear mother. Oh, how many blessings has He bestowed on me!"

Poor Rosa! you will need all your faith in that Sun of Righteousness, and in the promises of a covenant-keeping Father. It seems a pity that it cannot be always smooth sailing, but it would not be well for us if it were so. We should not long and sigh for the haven. See, the clouds are gathering, and the sky is darkening! Listen, the wind sighs mournfully and the waves get angry! Enjoy the sunshine, for the storm is brewing!

CHAPTER XIII.

NOT SO WORLDLY.

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man 's the gow'd for a' that."

It is the height of the London season, and a large party is again assembled at the Mayberry's, and among the rest of the company are the Rev. Harvey Waterland and Sir Harry Shelford. After his interview with Mr Mayberry, as narrated in a previous chapter, Mr Waterland had determined in his own mind to have no more to do with them than what his professional duties or the relationship which existed between the pastor and his congregation might devolve upon him. And for some time he carried out his resolution, calling occasionally in a pastoral manner, or to talk with the ladies, who interested themselves in the district, about some of the necessitous poor. But on further consideration—thinking, perhaps, that Mr Mayberry would say nothing to his family as to what had transpired between them, and as Miss Sophia displayed too much good sense to shew that she knew anything about the affair—he concluded it would be better not to resent

the refusal he had met with from the father, but to keep a watch over his own heart, and wait to see the issue of affairs. Accordingly, though he had not dined with them since that time, yet we now find him, some few weeks after the interview, among the party assembled there. On these occasions he generally met people whom he knew sufficiently well to make the evening pass agreeably ; so that he need be at no fault for a companion, and his own well-stored mind could easily supply a subject for discussion. On the present occasion, however, though the room was full of company, he felt lonely, and but little inclination to enter into conversation with any one. A time or two he had made the attempt, but as his thoughts only wandered to Sophia, and his eyes watched her about the room, he concluded it in vain to try to converse with any one, so gave himself up to thought and making observations. He had spoken to Sophia on first entering the room ; but Sir Harry appeared to be her principal companion throughout the evening. It is true, she would rise from her seat from time to time, and go and talk with some one else, but soon after Sir Harry would find his way to her side again. At one end of the drawing-room was a door opening into the conservatory and greenhouse, and as Mr Mayberry had a fine collection of choice plants, several of the party disappeared through the door from time to time, for the purpose of seeing them. Therefore, feeling ill at ease, and not caring

about society, Harvey turned into the conservatory, to look over the flowers and plants, and enjoy his own reflections alone. Among the guests assembled there that evening was a Mr Jarvis, who had at first intended to enter holy orders, but thinking himself not fit for the duties, and the Church offering but a poor prospect, he turned to business, and was then one of the most rising merchants of London. He had been an old college friend of Mr Waterland's, and as they often met, were still on friendly terms. No sooner, therefore, had the latter entered the conservatory, than Jarvis followed him. "Hallo, old fellow," said he, thrusting his arm in that of the curate's, "what brings you moping out here?"

"That's just what I want to know myself. I suppose it is to admire the productions of nature."

"And so you would make believe that you have left the flowers of the drawing-room to admire the less beautiful of the green-house. No, no, Waterland, *ille gallus non vult*; I see there are only one or two old dowagers here, or I should say you came expecting to find one of the drawing-room flowers here."

"But as that supposition is completely floored, perhaps I may ask why you have left the company?"

"To enjoy that of my old college friend, the bishop as is to be. By the way, old fellow, it looks like a match between Sir Harry and Mayflower No. 2."

"Some people are so clever at reading the signs of

the times; but for my own part I pretend to no such skill."

"I am talking to a parson, or I should say I could see that with my eyes shut."

"I am glad to hear you have too much respect for my profession to make use of such trifling terms; really the world is getting better."

"Thanks to such bright stars as the one now leading me. But, I say, isn't that No. 2 a pretty creature?"

"What a discovery you have made! However, I protest against such a common definition as No. 2 being applied to one so lovely."

"Never mind, old boy. I am booked myself, but I hope Mrs Bishop will be as pretty a creature as *she* is."

"Time enough to talk about the mitre when I get to be rector. But when is your wedding to take place? Mind you, I expect a good heavy fee whenever it comes off."

"Oh, there's time enough for that. 'Put off the evil day as long as you can,' is my motto. Said I not right, O king? Look to the right, and see if one can be blind to appearances."

As he said this, he directed Mr Waterland's attention to a part of the conservatory where Sir Harry and Sophia stood looking at some beautiful exotics then in full bloom. The form of the house was an oblong, with a kind of circular transept in the middle; and as Mr

Waterland and his friend paced up and down the oblong part, and as several parties continued coming in and going out, they had not noticed Sir Harry and Sophia till Mr Jarvis accidentally saw them in the transept. We have before said that Mrs Mayberry had informed her daughter as to what had transpired between Mr Waterland and her husband ; and although Sophia had resolved in her own mind, that, however advantageous in a worldly point of view an offer from Sir Harry might appear, she could not accept it ; yet, on the other hand, she considered it her duty not to irritate her parents by shewing any preference for Mr Waterland. She also thought it no more than right that she should give no encouragement to Sir Harry's attentions to her, nor wound Mr Waterland's feelings by so doing. She had therefore spoken to them both on their entering the room that evening, and then had mingled with the rest of the company. But throughout the evening, Mr Waterland seemed, if not to shun her, at all events not to seek her company ; whilst, on the other hand, she was almost annoyed by Sir Harry's attentions. Several times had she got up from her seat, and left him to converse with some one or other of the company, when presently he would be by her side again, to her no small annoyance. Her parents, however, were pleased to see matters proceed as they thought so favourably, and did what they could to help Sir Harry in his suit.

It is strange that parents should have so little of their children's happiness at heart, as is too often the case. Ambition, rather than happiness, appears to be the chief aim of many; and provided there be wealth or a title, or both, then the motives and feelings which alone should influence in such circumstances are cast to the four winds. Many a designing parent, and many an ambitious daughter, who has stifled every nobler and gentler feeling for the sake of a name and show, have had to atone for their folly by a long life of unhappiness and misery.

It was customary with Sophia to decorate her hair with no other ornament or head-dress than the beautiful flowers of nature from the garden or green-house. And on the present occasion the rich tresses of her auburn hair were encircled by a simple wreath of the Bankshire rose, mingled with a few white flowers of a rare exotic. At the time Mr Waterland left the room, she rose from her seat in order to be relieved of Sir Harry's company, and went to another part of the room, to converse with a lady friend. But after a while her mother came to her, bringing with her Sir Harry.

"My dear Sophy, Sir Harry has been admiring your wreath, and wishes to see the plant from which you gathered those rare flowers. Will you accompany him to the conservatory and point it out?"

Sophia knew this was as much her mother's plan as Sir Harry's, and therefore felt vexed. But checking

herself by the thought, that, though it was her duty to be courteous and entertaining towards her father's guests, she need not encourage Sir Harry in his attentions ; she therefore laughingly said—

“I think, Sir Harry, if you want to lionize the greenhouse, my mamma would make the best show-woman, for she is quite a botanist, and I am not.”

“Aw—I don't—aw—appreciate blue-stockings, so shall be content with yaw supewiaw escort.”

And as this complimentary speech was followed by her mother remarking—“Never mind, my love, Sir Harry will be satisfied with a sight of the plant without a lecture on botany,” she could do no other than go with him. However, as she rose to accompany him she said to her friend—

“Perhaps you would like to see it also, Miss Henderson?”

“Oh no, I will be content with seeing the flowers in your wreath ; and, besides, I don't want to be ‘gooseberry’ by making a third party,” said that lady, with a good-natured smile.

She therefore made the best of it and went. “O money ! O titles ! what a power you exercise, and what won't people do to obtain possession of you !” were her thoughts as she proceeded thither.

It was whilst pointing out the plant to him that Mr Jarvis called his friend's attention to them by the foregoing remark. To leave Sir Harry and proceed back

at once to the drawing-room, or in order to shew equal politeness to Mr Waterland and his friend, she knew would only irritate her parents; she therefore waited till the two friends were within a convenient distance, and then said—

“Mr Waterland, have you seen these plants? They are considered very fine ones of their kind.”

No sooner, therefore, had the latter and his friend joined them and commenced conversation with Sir Harry, than, seeing through the glass that one of the ladies of the party was just leaving the conservatory for the drawing-room, she joined her and proceeded thither also. She had not been in the room long when the three gentlemen entered, and soon after Sir Harry again found his way to her side. Feeling more annoyed than flattered by so much of his company, she said—

“Sir Harry, you seem restless to-night; and I fear others of the party will think you very impolite by your giving me so much of your time and attention.”

“Aw—why—it is so horribly warm at this season of the yeaw, one feels—aw—idle.”

“Oh, you should go and talk to the rest of the company, and forget all about it.”

“Aw—I am not so clewaw as to—aw—forget my feelings. Aw—I should fancy I have drunk a bottle of champaign to-night, and—aw—I am no coolaw.”

“I should hardly think you would by adopting such a plan.”

"Aw—I use nothing now but champaign, for it is the only bevawage one can drink this weathaw."

"What an enviable woman your wife must be if you mean to drink nothing but champaign in your house!"

"Aw, why—aw, I did not mean to propose so soon—aw, but as you have first mentioned the subject, aw—perhaps you will accept an offaw of marriage from me—aw, and become that enviable person yourself."

She felt the blood suffuse her whole countenance at this speech and declaration, and said, "Sir Harry, you have greatly misconstrued my remarks; however, so far from wishing to become your wife, let me tell you, once and for all, that I never could become your wife."

"I beg you—aw pardon—but I think after all you, aw—you have decided right, for, though it might be—aw, advantageous to your family—aw, I dont ca—aw to marry at present." Saying which he walked away.

Sophia felt that her face was crimson, but hoping that no one noticed her embarrassment, she strove to regain her composure. What, therefore, was her mortification on looking around, as Sir Harry turned away, to see Mr Waterland's eyes fixed upon her in an interesting yet melancholy manner. He was conversing with Miss Henderson, and though he appeared to give his ears to that lady, and now and then to make an occasional remark, it was evident to Sophia, at first-sight, that his thoughts were with her and Sir Harry, and that he had seen what had passed between them.

No sooner, however, did he perceive that Sophia knew that he was watching her, than he turned his observation in another direction, and continued the conversation with Miss Henderson ; and Sophia rose from her seat and went to another part of the room. Mr Waterland had long been on friendly terms with the Mayberrys, and as he had so often spent a quiet evening there, and had seen so much of them, he had felt privileged to make remarks to them which—coming from any one else—might appear rude and uncalled for. As it was nearly the time when he generally left for home, he waited till he could see an opportunity, and then went and sat beside Sophia.

"I am going home, Miss Sophia," said he, on joining her ; "but as I have lately seen so little of you, I have been waiting to say good-night."

"You leave early, Mr Waterland."

"I never keep late hours. I have heard from one or two quarters, Miss Sophia—and what I have seen to-night confirms the report—that I may offer you my congratulations."

"I cannot tell what you allude to, though I partly guess ; so you must speak more plainly, and then I will tell you if you are right, and whether report be true."

"I refer to your engagement with Sir Harry Shel-ford."

"Mr Waterland," said she, blushing, "my hand and

my heart will go together, or else I never marry. You, at all events, ought to know me sufficiently well to know that I could never accept an offer from Sir Harry, notwithstanding his wealth and title."

Just then Mrs Mayberry joined them, so wishing them both good-night, he quietly left the room.

"No, Sophia, it was an injustice to you to suppose that you would marry Sir Harry. Your goodness and worth would far more than out-balance his money and small title, and the man is to be envied that wins you for a wife." So thought Harvey Waterland, as he went home that night. So think we. What say you, O reader?

CHAPTER XIV.

A DISCOVERY.

"Ah! well do I wot the perils and snares
Of this bad world and its lust;
Temptations and sorrows, vexations and cares,
Grow with the heart's young wheat like tares,
And worry it down to the dust!"

"WELL, Sophy, you have not caught Sir Harry yet, I suppose?" said Mr Mayberry to his daughter, the next morning at breakfast; "you are a long time about it."

"I am not aware that I have been trying; at all events, papa, I can assure you he is quite at large and at liberty, so far as I am concerned."

"Well, then, I don't care how soon he catches you, if you like that phraseology better," said he, rather tartly.

"Why, dear papa, are you so tired of me? I am sure I could never marry Sir Harry."

"Sophy, my child," said he, in a softer tone, "you are too good a girl for me to be tired of you, that is why I want to see you marry well; but let me advise you to marry Sir Harry as soon as ever you have the chance to do so, or you may have to take up with some one else that is far inferior."

She was going to say, "That can hardly be," but thinking it would vex her father, and not knowing why he should address her in such terms, she laughingly said—

"I am getting so dreadfully old, who knows but what I am beginning to despair altogether?"

"Well, my dear, don't stand in your own light, is what I advise," and then he left the room, and went to his business in the city.

"Papa seemed quite cross this morning," said she to her mother and sisters, when he had gone; "surely he would not wish me to marry Sir Harry against my own will, and as I have only just turned twenty, why need I be in a hurry?"

"My dear, your papa spoke for your own good. Sir Harry pays you very marked attentions, and the sooner he makes you an offer the better," said her mother.

"Which would undoubtedly be refused if he were. I thought, mamma, I had made myself understood on that subject."

"I only wish I had the chance," said her elder sister, "you should soon see me Mrs Sir Harry."

"Then I will hand him over to you," said Sophia.

"You are a silly girl, Sophy, and I wish I had told you nothing about Mr Waterland," said her mother; "but let me tell you that your papa is in great difficulties, and knows not how long he may be able to keep up this house and present appearances; that is why he

wants to see you and Sir Harry make a quick match of it."

This was an announcement for which they were none of them prepared. Having always been brought up in ease and comfort, and latterly amidst luxury and splendour, they had never doubted but that they must be rich. As for Sophia, often in her visits among the poor had she seen great poverty and want, and done what she could to relieve them; but she had, nevertheless, returned to her home feeling very thankful that she was not poor, and that she had so many blessings. Now, however, the dreadful thought rushed across her mind, that perhaps she might soon be as poor, and, therefore, she was for the instant speechless, and could only say, "Mamma!" whilst her sisters burst into tears, and began to weep.

"Yes, my dear girls," Mrs Mayberry proceeded, "I have known nothing of your papa's affairs, and it was only this morning that he told me; but as I find you must know ere long, I tell you all thus soon, that you in particular, Sophia, may make the best use of your time, and catch Sir Harry if you can." And seeing that her daughters were much distressed, she said, "Come, now, don't make such a trouble of it, for your papa's difficulties have been increasing for years, and he may go on for years to come, so don't trouble about what I have told you."

As several days and weeks passed by without their

hearing anything more about it, her two sisters concluded that all was going on prosperously again, and were, therefore, as gay and as light-hearted as ever. Not so, however, Sophia. She thought in her own mind that if her papa was in difficulties, he should, long ago, have reduced his expenses, and lived in a less ostentatious way. True, she could appreciate comforts, and be thankful for them, but at no time had her mind been set upon luxury and show, and now the uncertainty of their affairs made them less attractive than ever. Gladly would she leave their mansion of a house, with all its splendour, for some comfortable home which she could call her own, with Mr Waterland as her husband, than remain in her present uncertainty. As it was, she knew not how soon they might be cast upon the world; and Mr Waterland appeared further off than ever. "No, papa despises Mr Waterland, now we are living in splendour, and he would be to blame to offer again;" and the tears came into her eyes.

She had been visiting the poor one day, and had just returned home, when she was surprised to find that Mr Mayberry was come from the city—it being several hours earlier than the time he usually returned from business.

"Where's your mamma?" said he, in a cross tone, as she entered the room.

"I think she and sisters are driving in the park."

"Driving in the park! she had more need to stay at home."

"You are at home earlier to-day—are you unwell, dear papa?—can I do anything for you?" said his daughter, seeing that something had put him about, and putting her arm affectionately round his neck and kissing him, as was her usual manner on his coming home.

Sophia had ever been his favourite child—lovely, good-tempered, and winning, she generally succeeded in allaying his anger; and on the present occasion he put his arm round her waist, and said, in a kinder tone—

"And so it has come at last, Sophy."

"What has come at last, dear papa?"

"That I am a bankrupt—that we are outcasts—that we are penniless—that we are beggars."

"Surely it is not so bad as that, papa—something dreadful must have happened to make you think so—but surely you take a dark view of things."

"No, I do not: we have been getting worse ever since we came to this house, but I had not the resolution to stop; and now I am thousands and tens of thousands in debt, and we are homeless."

"Then, dear papa, we must strive and make a home—I am ready to work, and as I have received a good education, I am willing to put it to good account; if our circumstances are bad, we must improve them."

She then left the room to take off her bonnet ; and her father felt that, bad as things were, he was still rich in having such a daughter. Like Mr Waterland, he thought that the man who could win her would win a treasure—and so says the author. Is it not so, reader ?

It had been the same with Mr Mayberry as with thousands more. After he had found that he was going wrong, he had not the moral courage to turn and face the world boldly, and say, "I am in a false position, and travelling a wrong course," and then manfully retrace his steps : but like a man who quietly allowed himself to be drifted down by the stream without making one effort to gain the banks, so he allowed himself to be drawn into the very midst of the current, and was there borne down by luxury and extravagance to the destructive falls of commercial bankruptcy. And so it has been with thousands more. The young man just beginning his university career wishes to make a show and to pass favourably with his fellow-students, so commences a course of living far beyond his means, which leads him on to ruin. Another has not the moral courage to say, "No," and so gets deeply into debt, which hampers him for years afterwards. And Mr Mayberry, also, after he had got beyond his means, was too proud to lower his head, and too morally timid to retrench his expenses and come within his means, so went on in reckless extravagance till, in his

own words, he became a "bankrupt and a beggar." Even before taking the mansion in which he now lived, he was living beyond his income; and thus being unable to meet his creditors, he commenced a system of commercial swindling, so common in the world; took a larger house and kept up a far more expensive establishment, made a great show in the world, and thus deceived and robbed many who were toiling hard for what he was spending.

To Sophia the unwelcome truth which her father had that day revealed was very distressing. It was not simply being reduced in circumstances, and coming down to honest poverty—this she could have borne cheerfully—but her father had said that he was failing for tens of thousands. Was it, then, true that they were really all this in debt, and had not the means of paying it? Was it true that they had been living by false appearances, and that they were now coming to take their place amidst the great unwashed, with the scorn and contempt of every honourable and upright man resting upon them? Poor as they might be, could they not meet the world boldly in the face, with the feeling that they owed no man anything? This was the bitterest portion of the cup, and bitter it was indeed. However, she felt inwardly thankful that she had not been drawn into any engagement with Sir Harry: and as for Mr Waterland, what would he think of them all now? She could not hope that he would

make her an offer now ; he was indeed further off than ever. Many were the tears she shed that night ; but quieter and more peaceful thoughts succeeded, and committing herself and family to the guiding hand of God, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RISING CLOUD.

"Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest.

"And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Lies dark in view,
Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
Be stricken through."

IF the larger the amount the more the bankrupt is applauded, be a true statement,—and we are almost inclined to think that such is the case,—then Mr Mayberry ought to be loudly applauded, for the sum for which he failed was no trifling one. How many readers of the newspaper will pass their eyes over the account of one who failed for a few thousands as beneath their notice, but the bankrupt for his hundreds of thousands becomes notorious in the extreme. He is applauded for his cleverness, and very frequently gets a first-class certificate, and is soon after as great a man of business as ever. No doubt, when the report of Mr Mayberry's failure appeared among the public lists, those of far

honest men who failed for small amounts would scarcely obtain a notice, whilst the greater villain would be thought to have done something worth appearing thus publicly. His creditors were chiefly rich men, who would not feel the loss very severely; but, as is generally the case, there were a few whose very bread was taken away by his fall, and who were thus dragged down by him to absolute ruin. And of the latter class was Hanmore Lawson. All winter long he had been urging on his hands, and had laid out all the money he could get together,—which, as we have seen, was upwards of £1700, which he received for his last stock,—in order to complete a large order for spring goods which Mr Mayberry had again given him.

He had received the accustomed promissory-note at three months' hence, and his fears arose as to Mr Mayberry's stability when he could not get it discounted. Still, however, as he had always received his money by the time it fell due, he hoped that such would be the case again. But ere that time came, his worst fears were realised—the great man of business had proved a man of straw, and he himself was ruined.

This was the first great trouble that had overtaken him in his married life, and for some days after the news arrived, it seemed to overwhelm him. He now found more than ever what a treasure of a wife he

had in Rosa, and they both experienced how Christianity, and that alone, can sustain in times of trouble.

"My dear Hanmore," said his wife, a day or two after the news of Mr Mayberry's failure had reached them, when she saw how cast down he was, "we must not despair; things may not, after all, be so bad as they appear at first sight."

"Nay, how will you make our circumstances appear brighter?—they are too dark to admit of that."

"I make them appear bright by contrast, dearest: when I and my dear mother stood in that little room down by the sea-shore, she a widow and I a fatherless one, no one knows how dark our prospects appeared, and how lonely and sad we felt. But we cast ourselves upon the tender mercies of a covenant-keeping God, and the promise of being the husband of the widow and a father of the fatherless, has been fully realised by us both. No, my dear husband, it is true we have an increasing family, our all has been nearly swept away, and we are somewhat in debt; but let us be true to ourselves and to God, and He will manifest His power, and will help us."

"Well, my precious wife," said her husband, kissing her, "if you go on, I think you will make them appear bright. But I believe we men are, after all, more inclined to despond than you who are called the weaker sex."

"We must remember Simon's motto, 'The joy of

the Lord is our strength.' We have lost, but that assumes that we had wherewith to lose. Let us, therefore, say with Job, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

Thus was Hanmore Lawson buoyed up by the loving, trusting, Christian spirit of his wife. And so have many a doubting and desponding one. Truly did the wise man say, "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

Hanmore found that he was somewhat in debt, and therefore he determined, that if he could not continue as a master and employer, he would turn workman himself—but keep out of debt he would. Consequently, a great part of his looms and warehouse stock had to be sold, and the factory to be given up. A small shop adjoining his house was fitted up; two large looms were set up, and thus, with a wife and four children, the master-man had to turn workman, and to begin the world once more. However, he had a loving wife and children to cheer and encourage him; his troubles were not of his own seeking, and therefore he could say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;"—he was out of debt, and had good health, and a character without a blot—and with these, who would not take courage? True, he had to work hard, but it was no more than many others had to do, thought he to himself, as he toiled away; and his wife made his home, if possible, more dear to him than ever.

Such a sudden fall in the world was far from being rare during that memorable year of 1857. Many a one had to give up the large house in the fashionable street, and send away the servants, and take up their humble abode in some back street or in lodgings—and that, too, not from their own reckless extravagance and dishonourable conduct, like that of Mr Mayberry, but from the losses which they had sustained from the frauds of others. It may be that some one who reads these pages will do so with a sigh as he thinks of that eventful year: but cheer up, downcast one; the upright, trusting, manly spirit may be cast down, and the battle of life may appear very difficult, but conquer you must in the end. “Quit yourselves like men and be strong,” and then, although you may be sorely tried, yet, with the watchword “Though I fall, I shall rise again,” upon your lips, you shall go on to do wonders, and the darkness shall be light around you.

“Individual energy and determination, with a firm trust in the providence of God, have done wonders in times gone by,” thought Hanmore Lawson; “and why not now, as then?” If he compared his present prospects with what they had been for one minute, he would think the next, how much better off he was still than thousands more. If a desponding thought crept into his mind, he would work the harder, and dispel the demon by more exertion. And if a doubt in the fatherly care and providence of God for one moment

possessed him, he would pray till faith and trust and holy love returned once more to his soul. If we would all do the same, our success would oftentimes be greater than it is, and our troubles be less keenly felt.

It was found that the great man of splendour and show could pay little more than eighteenpence in the pound; and thus Hanmore lost nearly all, a bare pittance being left to him from his own small fortune and his ten years, hard striving and care. But we must reserve the particulars for a future chapter. The clouds had overspread, and the first beginnings of the storm were being poured out. The first big drops were felt; but how will it be when the heavens get blacker still, and the storm rages in all its fury? Will there be no refuge near? Will the rainbow and the silver lining be seen in the cloud?

CHAPTER XVI

NOBLE-HEARTEDNESS

"But let the dimm'd planet be setting
Below the horizon in cloud,
Right soon will your friends be forgetting
The gifts they so frankly allow'd;
Ah! Genius will shew very slight,
In the gloom of Adversity's night!"

THE news of Mr Mayberry's bankruptcy spread like wildfire among the circle who were accustomed to meet at his house, and among others to whom his family were but slightly known. "Eh! I say, he began that private carriage too soon," said one careful man of business to another, whilst riding in the omnibus to the city; "he'd better have been content to do as some of his betters do." "Well, really! only think, my dears," said the lady, at the mansion a little lower down the street, to her daughters, "and so our fine neighbours have got a come down. They should have caught Sir Harry first." "O mamma, as if Sir Harry would have that red-haired girl!" said the young ladies in chorus, and laughed at the idea. Now, it was not true that she was red-haired. And Sir Harry himself lounged care-

lessly in his easy chair, and sipped his coffee at breakfast, and smiled at the presumption of the would-be-great man. "The idea of their impudence to ape the style of their bettaws! It's a pity tradesmen should be, aw—allowed to mix with the aristocwacy;" and he stroked his mustaches and hung on that small handle to his name with great self-complacency. "I wonder what Mr Waterland will think now!" said several young ladies of his congregation, who met together some few days after, "he will see now that his preference for the daughter has been entirely misplaced: but anybody might have known that there would be a crash there."

Now it had never been whispered to the world that the said Mr Waterland had once proposed for Sophia; neither had he been aware that he had shewn any signs of preference for her in public over the other young ladies of his flock. But the truth is, ladies can see much further in such matters than those of the opposite sex. They will walk round a man, take stock of him, and pronounce him to be in love in a short time. And in the smile, or the shake of the hand, or any little attention which he will pay, and think that nobody in the world can divine his feelings, they, the dear little things, will analyse with as much skill as a chemist would any body of matter, and decide accordingly. Although, therefore, Mr Waterland thought in his own mind that no one else knew of his preference

for Sophia but her own father, several of the ladies of his flock could tell a different story. "When the church was decorated last Christmas, why did he shew such admiration for her part in the work? when the district visitors met, and at other times, why did he speak in a softer tone to her? and why had he so often dined at their house when there was no other company there?"

As for Mr Waterland himself, his first thoughts, on hearing the news of Mr Mayberry's failure, were how he could befriend the family. True it was that he had been scorned as a suitor by the father during his fashionable and luxurious life; and it was also true that commercial men who live by a system of downright fraud and robbery were not deserving of sympathy and help when they came down to their proper level: but the family, at all events, were to be pitied; and, besides, he loved Sophia, and for her sake would do what he could to befriend them. As soon, therefore, as he knew that their house was in the possession of the authorities of the law, he hastened to offer, by permission, a home to part of the family with his own mother and sisters in the country.

"No, Mr Waterland," said Sophia, "if you could procure me some situation as governess, so that I may get an honest living and help my family, I shall be thankful: but I find now that we have been living too long on the public for me to accept the kind offers of a home

from your family." She might have said that she felt he had been too unkindly used for them to deserve any help or sympathy from him ; but she did not.

"We thank you very much," said Mrs Mayberry, "but we are going to stay a short time with my sister and her husband." And then, thinking, no doubt, that it had all proved a failure with respect to Sir Harry, she got up and left Sophia with Mr Waterland, in the hope that he would again renew his offer which had been hitherto despised.

"But do you really wish to obtain a situation as governess?" said he, as the door closed.

"I do. I must begin life in earnest now ; and it would be wrong to suppose there was no battle of life for me to fight equally with the rest of the world."

"Well, I will do what I can to procure one, should the next proposition which I have to make fail."

"And what is that?"

"That you will fight that battle by my side, as my wife—that you will share with me my home and my fortune. May I hope for such happiness to be mine?"

"The time has been when I might—yea, when I would—could I have consulted my own feelings ; but I can't now."

"Why not ? It is true my income will not allow me to offer such a home as what you have been accustomed to : but I am sure I am not wrong in saying that you are of too much good sense to consider splendour and

luxury indispensable to happiness. I can offer you a good, quiet home, and a heart that has long been yours."

"I thank you for the compliment you pay me, Mr Waterland. Your prospects I did not think of, and the sincerity of your attachment I doubt not: but you were denied and scorned by my father as a suitor for my hand when we lived in splendour, and now we are penniless and outcasts; how can I accept you?"

"That is pride in the opposite direction—pardon me for saying so; if that is your only objection, pray wave that and be mine."

"No, the world would talk more than ever then; and would say that as I had failed in catching Sir Harry, I had managed to catch you directly. That you will say is pride, but I cannot help it. Much as it pains me to refuse your offer, I cannot accept it under present circumstances."

"Then I am denied by both father and daughter—the one despised my means, the other rejects my love. Is it not so?" said he, in a sorrowful tone.

"Mr Waterland, you do me an injustice," said Sophia, and the tear started to her eye.

"Then why not banish such scruples, and become mine?"

"I cannot be indifferent to the opinion of the world, and therefore I cannot accept your offer; but I promise you this, I will have no one else."

"And is it useless, then, to press you? and will you never be mine?"

"To the first part of your question I must say, it is; to the latter part, time only must shew. Till my father's affairs are settled and I see him in a way of business again, and my sisters are getting a living, till then I cannot accept your offer. We are poor now and must all strive, and if you can obtain me a situation as governess, I shall be very grateful to you."

"I doubt not I can, and, at all events, you will let me be your friend," said he, rising to depart. "You shall hear from me again soon."

The door closed behind him. She heard his footsteps die away along the streets, and then she covered her face and wept.

"Noble, unselfish girl!" thought Harvey Waterland, as he returned home. "I admire you more than ever for this devotedness to the welfare of your family; and perhaps you have acted right, though you could have helped them just as well by becoming my wife."

Through the interest of one or two clerical friends with their congregations, he was soon enabled to acquaint her of several families in want of a governess: and as her elder sister had begun to see the true state of affairs, and the necessity of doing something herself, they both accepted suitable situations, and the mother and younger sister went to live with their friends.

After a while, Mr Mayberry's accounts were exa-

mined, when it became evident that he had been insolvent for years, and that latterly his transactions had been dishonest in the extreme. The splendid furniture and plate were sold; the green-house and establishment disposed of; and where a few months ago there assembled the gay and fashionable parties, there were the empty rooms, and a placard "To be let" stuck in the windows. Thus ended the year 1857, a year in which the changes here spoken of were no rare instances. The commercial world was taught a severe lesson at that time. May they profit by it!

No doubt Sophia and her sister felt the change in their life most keenly; but they determined to go on in their path of duty, and to prove to the world that they, at all events, would endeavour to do right. The former, in particular, interested herself so far in her father's affairs as to learn who were the principal creditors, and what were their circumstances; and when she heard of the trifling sum in the pound which her father could pay, her heart was pierced by the thought of how much they had been robbed. She, nevertheless, felt thankful, that although she could not hope to see them fully paid, yet they were people who, from what she heard of them, would be able to bear the loss. There were also a few poor creditors to whom small sums were due, such as the laundress, the milliner, and the charwoman; these, at all events, should not be losers, for she would take account of all, and work till

she had paid them. The servants, also, of their house—for them, too, she interested herself, and obtained for them situations. “I had need to strive to amend the evil done to the world by our luxurious style of living,” she would say to herself at times: and when during the day she had been able to provide a situation for a servant, or to give to the more needy a portion of the money due to them, she would go to bed far happier for so doing, and her rest would prove the sweeter.

In these days, when so much is said about the numberless governesses that are in want of situations, the smallness of their salary, and the distresses which many of them have to endure, it is not to be supposed that Sophia accomplished unheard-of wonders. By great perseverance, self-denial, and Christian charity, she merely did what hundred others might do; and if hundreds of others would use the same endeavours to discharge what is evidently their duty, there would be far less misery in the world than at present. Large as is the number of unemployed governesses, or of those who have to accept a merely nominal stipend, the number of really efficient ones is comparatively small, and may command a liberal salary. Consequently, Sophia was enabled to obtain a liberal one; and whatever she could save from it she was determined to devote to the paying of those poorer creditors upon whom her father’s insolvency would otherwise fall with more terrible effects. Eighty or a hundred pounds is a paltry sum

to many in the world, and no doubt it appeared so to Sophia: but it took months of hard toil and self-denial to acquire it. There was, however, one consolation, that such a sum would appear like a small fortune when divided among a few of those of the lowest station in society who are mainly dependent upon the rich, and who generally feel the failure, removal, or death of a rich man so keenly. For these Sophia had long been toiling and saving—these she had the satisfaction of being able to pay one after another the respective sums due to them from her father. As for the larger creditors and shopmen, she could never hope to pay them a tithe of what was due—a hundred lifetimes would not accomplish that; but they were, for the most part, men who would not be ruined or left destitute by such a loss, and she must be comforted by the thought that she had done what she could, and had staved off much unhappiness and misery by her own noble exertions and self-denial.

Thus passed away the year 1858—memorable to many as the commencement of a new start of fresh struggles and other trials in life, as its predecessor had been the fatal termination of unsuccessful ones. Again and again had Mr Waterland pressed his suit upon her, and with no better success than before. “You know my determination, Mr Waterland,” said she, on the last occasion, “and although such determination may appear to partake of the nature of obstinacy, yet it appears

to me to be right; and, therefore, I cannot swerve from it. I am not acquainted with the laws of bankruptcy," she continued; "but my father hopes to obtain a certificate soon. He will then be in a position to start once more, in a more honourable career, I trust, than the last; and as I have paid some few of our creditors who could ill afford to lose, my exertions must be now mainly used in behalf of my family."

"You are cruel, Miss Sophia!" said he, in a tone of reproach, "you even reject all my offers of assistance."

"When both I and my sister are even indebted to you for our situations! No, Mr Waterland, you wrong me greatly. When my father has got his certificate, if you can then help him in any way towards getting an honest living, I shall feel thankful to you as long as I live." She might have added, what pain and self-sacrifice it caused her to refuse the offer of his heart and fortune, and that although her conduct might appear to proceed from a proud spirit, yet there was One who knew the lowliness, the uprightness, and devotedness of her loving nature. However common in the commercial world such transactions as those of her father's had been, she could not but consider them as dishonest; and though consideration and respect for a parent's weakness might lead her to take a charitable view of the case, she felt a pang of shame and sorrow when she thought of the extent of his insolvency. She

also felt in her heart that he had done her an unkindness in rejecting the offer which Mr Waterland had made him for her hand, when he knew that she preferred him to the rest of the world. And now, how could she, the bankrupt's daughter, accept Mr Waterland's offer under the present circumstances; even though she almost adored him? Painful as the supposition was, it was not at all impossible that her father might again be guilty of dishonourable actions; or else be broken spirited by his fall, and make himself a burden and a disgrace to her husband, and his sacred profession, were she to marry him now. And although when a man marries it is quite true that he does not marry the whole family, neither is a child answerable for the conduct of its parents, yet she knew Mr Waterland too well to think that he would be indifferent to the welfare and success of her parents in life; and a child often suffers, by pain and reproach, by its parents' offences, though not answerable for them. She would therefore hope the best; and when her father was free to start again, she would try to cheer and help him to the utmost of her ability—she would try and encourage him when downcast and desponding, to look kindly and lovingly when others despised and scorned, and with a daughter's affection and forbearance, to urge him on towards the high position of rectitude, independence, and honour, from whence he had so grievously fallen. All this, and much more, she might have answered Mr

Waterland; but she did not. He, however, readily guessed it. "Noble-hearted, generous, magnanimous girl," thought he, as he proceeded home; "may your father prove himself worthy of such a daughter! and may Heaven direct and bless us all!"

CHAPTER XVII

GOOD NEWS.

"For Heaven bends over to help and to bless,
With all a Redeemer's power,
The spirit that strives, when evils oppress,
Its God to serve, and its Lord to confess,
In dark temptation's hour."

WHO does not know what London is during the hot summer months? The dusty streets, the burning sun glaring down upon and amidst the numberless buildings, and a feeling of stifling dust and heat everywhere. The shopmen lounge about or stand looking at each other from behind their counters, and the entrance of a customer is quite a god-send to relieve their monotony. Even the very water one drinks at that season is warm ; and all things seem to combine together to drive out of the town those who can afford a journey into the country.

In the month of July, therefore, of the year 1859, we find Sophia Mayberry and the family with whom she is resident-governess whirling away down the Great Western Railway to spend a few weeks at the lovely little watering-place of Clevedon. And among all the departures of aching hearts, listless "ennui," depressed

spirits, or shattered health which left London that summer, there was no one to whom the quiet of the country and the pure sea air would be more acceptable than to Sophia. Having been brought up amidst luxury and ease, the drudgery of a schoolroom, together with the self-sacrifice which she had made to pay their poorest creditors, and the anxiety of mind she had been in for months respecting her family and their future prospects, all these combined were beginning to tell upon her health and spirits. The family with whom she lived were kind Christian people and fully sensible to her worth: and as she had now no home besides what relatives and a few kind friends chose to offer her, they had prevailed upon her to accompany them during their summer change to Clevedon.

“Both you and the children need an entire rest,” said Mrs Grantley, the mother of her pupils, “and as my husband will have to be in London at times, you must come with us and be my companion and guest.” Accordingly we find them in the middle of that July whirling away from the dust and heat of London—down through the bright flowery country—through woods and coppices—through green meadows and brown corn-fields—by villages and towns, till they arrived at the quiet little bathing-place on the British Channel.

If any of our readers know that beautiful little spot, Clevedon, they will bear us out in the remark that a more lovely neighbourhood can hardly be found. It

is quite true that the waters are muddy and there is no good bathing-place—it is also quite true that a mere corner of the Channel is all the sea within view there ; and yet for the quiet and accommodation, the beauty of the place, and loveliness of the neighbourhood round, there are not many places that excel it. The Grantleys had taken one of those large houses beyond the hotel, which look down upon the beautiful bay : and as the family sat down to dinner after their long dusty journey from London, and the tide flowed in musically under a bright evening sun, as we have so often seen it, we fully agree with Sophia's remark, that "it was a delightful change from London."

The family had been there nearly a fortnight, and already had the change begun to be sensibly felt in the more vigorous tone of both body and mind ; added to which, the brighter prospects which began to dawn upon the Mayberrys, filled Sophia's heart with hope and joy for the future. Her father had obtained what is called a third-class certificate, and Mr Waterland had great hopes of procuring for him a clerkship in a large mercantile house in Manchester. And as the salary was liberal, and her father seemed determined to exert himself in future, and to lead a strictly honourable life, "who knows but that he may yet succeed in the world? Who knows but what he may yet be able to pay to all their dues, and to hold up his head as a strictly just and honourable man? He was, it is true,

tens of thousands in debt, and he was now poor ; but once fairly started with a firm purpose, and an unswerving determination to act aright, what might he not accomplish ? Others had done as much, and why not he ?” Such were her remarks to Mrs Grantley, as the two walked out one day, her two pupils running on before ; and at the thought of such laudable success, her beautiful gray eyes shone with animation, and her upright, loving heart bounded again for joy.

“It is true,” she continued, “in the eyes of the law, I suppose, my papa’s debts are discharged ; but I shall never think so till the twenty shillings in the pound are paid.”

“Well, my dear girl,” said Mrs Grantley, “you must not trouble yourself about that, but hope for the best, and encourage Mr Mayberry to persevere in his path of duty. And I am sure,” she continued, “he cannot help but strive, when he has such a noble daughter as you to urge him on in his course.”

Mrs Grantley had always treated her more as a daughter than as governesses are usually treated. As a rule, governesses are more to be pitied than any other class in the world. Being, for the most part, daughters of poor and respectable gentlemen, and possessing no other fortune than their education, they cannot, from their habits and position, mingle with the servants of the household, and my fine lady does not consider them fit to mix with the family in the drawing-room. Con-

sequently, they fall between the two great divisions of the family, and feel lonely amidst the bustle and stir of a large household. Money does wonders now-a-days; and many a vulgar, uneducated, but moneyed woman scorns to mix in company with her poor, but ten times more lady-like, better educated, and nobler-minded governess. It appears strange that people should consider a lady fit to teach their children, to form their mind, to associate with them for hours in a day as their instructress, and yet should not look upon her as worthy to be their companion at other times. The prevailing opinion seems to be, that a certain sum of money is paid for the time and learning of the individuals,—the rack of brain, the anxiety and care, the patience and forbearance which are exercised day after day, are not thought of,—and provided such time be given, and their knowledge be infused by them into the minds of their pupils, why, then, their own comfort, feelings, and happiness are matters of perfect indifference.

We are happy, however, to say, that there are a few exceptions to this general rule, and the kind treatment which Sophia met with from the Grantley family was an instance. A stranger would have taken her to be one of the family, had they seen on what terms she was with them; and, as she was then barely two-and-twenty, many a more likely mistake has been made.

On the western side of Clevedon there is an old

ruined tower of a church, and further on up the hill a castellated fortress, also in ruins. On still, and a little higher, is a narrow ridge of table-land, covered with a soft, thick, grassy turf, and overlooking a rich valley on the one side, and the Bristol Channel on the other. A few hawthorn bushes, shrubs, and stunted firs are scattered about, and on a calm spring morning, or fine summer's eve, a more lovely spot can hardly be imagined. It was on the evening in question that Mrs Grantley, her two little girls, and Sophia started there for a walk, during which the latter had expressed her hopes respecting her father's future conduct, as narrated above. On the one side might be seen a few West Indian merchant-ships, and other vessels of smaller craft, steadily pursuing their course up the Channel to Bristol, or else bound on their outward course; whilst on the other, the meadows looked green and shady, and occasionally a field of grain nearly ripe for the harvest was dotted among them. The sun was still a considerable height above the horizon, and a refreshing breeze was stealing up from the waters. All nature looked quiet, peaceful, and happy, and seemed to invite mankind to be cheerful and happy also. Mrs Grantley had brought her drawing materials and camp-stool with her, and sat down to sketch, whilst Sophia lolled on the soft grass beside her and read. Her two pupils, whose respective ages were eleven and thirteen, romped about for a while, and then, after

having decorated each other's hair with wreaths of the wild clematis, called by the cottagers "honesty," brought a quantity to adorn Sophia's with. Her hat was hanging by the strings round her neck, her younger pupil was kneeling behind her, and the other on one side, busy in their decorations; and she was thinking how delightful it was to throw off the restraints of the town, and enjoy the simplicity and freedom of country life. Presently they had finished their decorations, and had intertwined the wreath amidst the rich tresses of her auburn hair.

"Look, mamma," said one of them, "doesn't Miss Mayberry look beautiful now? See! mamma."

Mrs Grantley looked up from her sketching, when what was her surprise to see Mr Waterland some few paces from them, evidently dallying in order that they might see him before he got quite up to them. Sophia's first impulse was to pull off the wreath with which her pupils had adorned her hair, but finding that it would disorder her hair still more to do so, she arose and received him as she was.

"You have indeed made Miss Mayberry look beautiful," said he, in answer to her pupils' remark, as he shook hands with them. And, indeed, the glow which had suffused her cheeks on being thus taken by surprise, the happiness which beamed from her beautiful gray eyes, together with the simple wreath which the girls had twined round her brow, made her appear, in

his eyes, more lovely than ever. After a few passing remarks, Mrs Grantley said to her daughters, "Now, my dear children, you must come and shew me where you gathered that beautiful clematis," and then went off with them, leaving Mr Waterland and Sophia by themselves for a few minutes.

"I must apologise for my abrupt appearance," said he; "but you will forgive me when I tell you that I am the bearer of good news."

"Don't make too sure of that; you don't know how cruel I can be."

"Of that I have had a proof already, but——"

"Well, now, I am all impatient to hear," said she, interrupting him; "what of my father?"

"He has been accepted by the firm, and enters upon his office at once. I conveyed to him the news this morning, and then started by train to tell you."

"Oh, I am so thankful!—you are indeed a kind friend."

"I have also another piece of news to tell you," said he, lowering his voice, "something which concerns myself. Your father has done me a great favour this morning."

She looked at him, and guessed the rest. The time had come—one saw at a glance what the other hoped for and wished, the other saw that all his fondest hopes were realised.

The sun shone down quietly upon two loving hearts

about to travel together in life's journey, and smiled upon them. A gentle wind stole up from the sea, and brought them the sweet chimes of the waters in token of congratulation. One or two white fleecy clouds nodded their heads from above, and then majestically moved away towards their northern homes. A company of rooks, then crossing over a small arm of the Channel, and pursuing their course to their nests down in the valley below, cawed forth their good wishes as they passed over their heads, and bade them be happy. Happy spirits, up beyond the bright blue sky, chanted a hymn of praise, and bade them live and love and pray, till they arrived at their own blessed shores. And a loving Father spread out His hands and blessed them, and made them one in heaven.

"I am going to rob you of your governess," said Mr Waterland, as Mrs Grantley again joined them.

"You are worthy of each other," said she, "and I offer you both my congratulations. To say, I hope you will be happy, would be only paying you a compliment."

"I doubt not that we shall," was the reply.

Thus everything around them wished them happy; and why should not we? May you be blessed and happy, O loving and devoted ones!

CHAPTER XVIII

HARD TIMES.

"All for the best ! set this on your standard,
Soldier of sadness, or pilgrim of love,
Who to the shores of Despair may have wander'd,
A way-wearied swallow, or heart-stricken dove :
All for the best ! be a man, but confiding,—
Providence tenderly governs the rest,
And the frail bark of His creature is guiding
Wisely and warily, all for the best !"

WERE a foreigner to visit our land, he could hardly help pronouncing that "drunkenness" and "strikes" are the two great curses of our nation. Two-thirds of the misery which exists around us arises from these two sources ; and the sooner our labouring classes abandon both, the better it will be for them. No doubt it will appear to many as a great injustice to our artisans and mechanics, to speak of strikes in the same breath with drunkenness ; but they are, nevertheless, the parents of as much evil, and tend, in a great many instances, to beget the habit of "drink." In a great free country like this, it cannot be questioned but that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that every man should endeavour to obtain a fair equivalent for his

time and labour. Whilst, therefore, we would defend the working man in his endeavours to increase his earnings, we still maintain that, with the exception of the publican and landlord of the gin-palace, the system of strikes has never benefited any other class of society. When two or three hundred, and, in some instances, as many thousands, of poor, hard-working people are let loose upon the world, with nothing to do, and but a mere pittance to live upon—who can estimate the amount of evil and misery, setting aside the loss of labour and capital, which such an event must produce? The labour market is open the same as any other, and if a man, or number of men, find that their time and strength are going at a discount, let them seek another field, rather than attempt to increase their wages by a system of coercion or intimidation. It is seldom that such movements arise from the more quiet and industrious workmen, but from the disorderly and idle ones—men who have nothing to lose, and who prefer to live by agitation and preying upon others, rather than work themselves. Parties who compel or intimidate others from working are, we believe, amenable to the penalties of the law, and magistrates would do well to visit such offenders with all the punishment they deserve.

We hear and read a good deal about the oppression of the poor by the rich, but how little do we hear of that still greater evil, the oppression of the poor by the

poor! "Set a beggar on horseback and he will ride," says a quaint old English proverb; and we generally find that when a poor man is persecuted by others of his own class in life, such persecution is far more cruel than what those above him would condescend to inflict. . . .

We left Hanmore Lawson and family very much reduced by the failure of Mr Mayberry; and although he set to work with a good heart and a manly determination to "get on," yet the struggle now was not for a fortune and an independent position, but for their very existence. If sickness would keep away from his house, and work continued plentiful, he hoped to be able to maintain his family respectably, and to save a few pounds; but should the contrary be the case, there was no telling what might be their condition. However, as these were events over which he had no control, he thankfully accepted the present good, and made the best of it—leaving the future to an All-wise Providence. Thus the years 1858 and the following one passed away, and hitherto he had been able to provide for the wants of his family. Also, after paying all his debts, the pittance which he had received from the settlement of Mr Mayberry's affairs, added to what little he had been able to save in addition, amounted to £100, and was deposited in one of the banks of that town. But during the closing months of 1859, the rainy season, which lasted for the next ten

months, with but few slight intermissions, then set in, and produced a great effect upon the ribbon trade of that neighbourhood. During the close of that year, therefore, the Lawsons, together with many more, had hard work to make both ends meet without drawing on their little capital. To make matters worse, their mother, Mrs Melton, had long been ailing, and a doctor's bill was running on. Such was their condition at the commencement of 1860, and then work almost failed altogether. The French treaty, together with the wet season and the change of fashion, caused the market to be glutted with ribbons, and the manufacturers were obliged to reduce the rate of wages. The poor workmen, not understanding the cause, commenced their absurd strike, which, in that single instance, benefited the master and made their own case worse than before. And what proved more ruinous still to hundreds, a great improvement in the power-loom had lately been introduced, and many had spent their all in procuring what is called the "a la bar" loom, during the latter part of the last year. These looms, when work could be had, greatly increased the weekly income, and all the respectable artisans who could find money to buy them did so. Thus, for the time being, the looms were useless to them, although their all had been spent to procure them.

It was the same also with Hanmore Lawson. He had obtained two of these power-looms; and although

when the year commenced the maker of them had not sent in his bill, he knew that they would take nearly the whole of his little capital.

Everybody will remember that there was no real summer weather during 1860. A fine day would occasionally take place ; but, for the most part, it was cold, lowering, and rainy throughout the season. It was on the evening of one of those few fine days that Hanmore Lawson, his wife, and their two eldest children started for a walk into what is called the Park, on the south side of Coventry. Their prospects were becoming daily more dark and gloomy, and difficulties seemed to be hedging them in. They had paid for their new power-looms, and had £40 left in the bank : but soon after that, Mrs Melton grew worse, and on the day in question they had followed her to the grave. It was their wish to take her down to the sea side, and bury her beside her husband ; but, before dying, she had seen their increasing difficulties and forbade their incurring that extra expense ; and however careful they were in their expenses, they knew they would be more than they could well afford. "Come, my dear Rosa," said her affectionate husband, after all the attendants of the funeral had departed, "you look tired and weary, let us go for a quiet walk, and not dwell too much on our prospects."

Proceeding down Hertford Street and over Greyfriars Green, they went on along the Warwick Road.

Coventry, when seen from that direction, looks very beautiful. The green fields and gardens, the neat villa residences, and its lofty spires, added to its world-wide fame, tend to impress the traveller greatly in its favour, when entering the town on the south side. And even a citizen, who is familiar with the view, can hardly look at it from thence without feeling proud of the fine old city. When, therefore, Hanmore Lawson and his wife were returning, refreshed from their walk, and saw the churches and spires of their town rising up before them, they thought that it was indeed highly deserving of its renown.

"You don't know, dearest," said Rosa to her husband, "how the sight of our noble spires brings the thoughts of bygone days to my mind. The trials of my girlish days were no slight ones to me; and whenever I saw those spires, then, as now, they seemed to point upwards and to remind me of a happier state in heaven."

"Then you were edified on the Sunday within their sacred precincts, and during the week by their external appearance; truly you can say, 'There are sermons in stones.'"

"In those I can, at all events; for whether I see them rearing their heads into the clear blue sky, or hear the sweet music of the chimes which they send forth, my thoughts are at once drawn away from earth to things above."

"And I am sure I ought to entertain a great regard for them, if only from the fact that I first saw my precious wife in St Michael's Church."

"Ay, it was in those days that I used to feel sorrowful at the state of things around me, and at my dark prospects. But one might do as our friend Simon speaks of, 'set up a stone as says on it, it says, Ebenezer.'"

"It is well to look back upon the past, as it makes us love and trust and be thankful. Our prospects are dark, and seem to get more so every day, but we may indeed say, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.'"

"Yes, since those my troubles which I have alluded to, my father and mother have both reached heaven, without a doubt, and I have a loving husband and four dear children; truly I ought to be thankful, and not fear."

"But, 'when poverty enters in at the door,' what comes next?"

"Something which I don't believe in. We may be sorely put to it, for I fear trade will be bad till towards Michaelmas; but I cannot understand parties, who ever loved each other at all, losing their affection directly trouble and want come upon them."

"No, my dear Rosa, I don't believe in that either: but I dread poverty in another respect, for I fear that delicate, fragile frame of yours would not stand much hardship."

"I wonder who is forgetting the promise, 'As thy day is so shall thy strength be?'" said she, looking at him in a loving, rebuking manner; "there is One who will temper the mind to the shorn lamb; so let us trust and not fear."

By this time they had again entered Hertford Street on their way home. Their two children had been running first a little before and then behind them, chatting and talking to themselves, and were now on the other side of the street admiring the articles exhibited in the shop windows which they passed. Presently their eldest little girl, Mary, came running across to them, saying:—

"O mamma, do come here; there's a poor little girl crying over there where brother is, and says her mother is ill in bed, and she has had nothing to eat since breakfast."

As Mr and Mrs Lawson always encouraged their children in little acts of kindness and charity, they crossed over to where the poor child was.

"What is the matter, my little girl?" said Mr Lawson, taking the child by the arm.

"We are all hungry, and mother wodn't got nothing for us to eat, and she is ever so bad in bed. Oh, my mother!" and the poor child began to cry afresh.

"But where is your father?" said Rosa.

"Some naughty thing as they call 'strikes' made him frightened to work, and now there ain't none to

do, and he's gone a long way to fetch us some bread, and ain't come back since morning."

"Well, we will give you something to eat, come and shew us where you live," said Mr Lawson.

This was a time for the poor to help their neighbour, for no one knew how soon he might need assistance himself. Gaunt hunger and poverty, like some fell demons, were hemming the city round and were beginning to stalk the streets, and although they were kept at bay for some time by the noble efforts of philanthropy, yet onwards and onwards they came; till at last the cry went up from thousands, "We are starving! give us bread to eat!" and the strings of a nation's purse were generously loosened for their relief. Rosa looked at the poor child, who was about the same age as her own little Mary, and saw that she was clean, and her much-repaired clothes spoke of better days. For one moment their own dark prospects rose up before her, and the tear came into her eye as she thought how soon their own children might be in as sad a condition as that little stranger. Leading, therefore, her daughter into a neighbouring shop to buy a bun to satisfy the immediate wants of the poor child, they then accompanied her to her home. There they found the poor mother ill in bed and two other little children needing both nursing and food.

"My husband," said the poor woman to her inquiries, "started off this morning into the country to

see if he could earn a shilling, or get something for us to eat ; but there are so many now out of work, that I fear he won't succeed. We always got on comfortably and well till last winter, as trade was slack, and even then we managed to keep out of debt ; but then the strike began, and my husband could not work, and now there is none to do. We have pawned and sold almost everything we can to buy victuals, and now we are brought to this ; and my husband could not bear to hear the children cry for want, so went off."

All this was elicited by degrees, and they had no reason to doubt the truth of the statement. The woman's remark about strikes—"that although magistrates protected a man that worked, it was as much as his life was worth to dare to do so when there's a strike"—they knew to be true from their own experience.

"But does no one help you, now you are so badly off?" said Rosa.

"Yes, ma'am, the clergyman has been very good to us for weeks, and a lady as comes round as well ; but we have been without work so long, and now there are scores like us, and kind people have their hands full."

Hanmore started off with the children, leaving his wife to help the poor woman. Presently the kettle was boiled, bread and butter and tea provided, and the poor woman and children well fed. Then Rosa left, promising to call again some time, and felt happy in

being able to relieve such misery. Not simply were the poorer weavers suffering from the depression in trade, and expecting still greater hardships if the state of affairs lasted much longer; but tradespeople with large rents, the small capitalist and the manufacturer on a small scale—all were sufferers, and knew not what to expect.

“What a sad picture of distress!” said Rosa, as she again entered her home. “What must those poor parents feel when they hear their children cry for food and have none to give them?”

“It was indeed a sad picture, and one I fear that is becoming more common every day. Times are getting fearful to contemplate.”

They are indeed, Hanmore Lawson—for Coventry at least they are; the summer is going, rates are increasing, the poor-houses are filling, and many who would suffer the greatest extremities rather than apply for parochial relief, are almost starving for want. A whole troop of evils seem to gather round the devoted city—cold, nakedness, hunger, disease, and want enter the courts and lanes and streets, and leave marks of their visit behind them. Again and again they are battled with, but onwards and onwards they come. They have broken the ranks of the lower and first opposing force, and many a poor victim falls.

All summer long the Lawsons have been living upon their little savings, which amounted to but £40 at

the first commencement of the year, after paying for new machinery. The funeral expenses have been paid; but now Michaelmas is near at hand, and a year's rent is almost due. The last five-pound note is brought out to be changed, and then the loving wife puts her arms round her husband's neck, and kisses him as she pronounces, in sorrowful tones, "The last!" The sky gets darker still, and the storm increases.

The last sovereign is in a few weeks brought out to be changed. The husband looks at it as if loath to part with it—but what is to be done? Over and over again during the year he had tried to gain other employment to eke out their little savings, and to carry on till autumn should arrive, when a change of trade generally took place. But now autumn had come, and things looked worse than ever. He had gained a little at times, and everything had been put to the best account. Their clothes were being darned and mended to make them last, and they began to make an appearance of genteel poverty. The rent-day had come, and for the first time in his life Hanmore Lawson had been unable to discharge a debt when it was due, or called for. The days were shortening, the cold increasing, and stern winter drawing nigh. Thousands were out of employment, distress increased, and still no signs of amendment. They had many times sent a meal of victuals to their poor neighbours around, and now,

were they to need public charity themselves? So it would appear, judging from their prospects.

"It must go, my precious Hanmore," said his wife, as she saw him looking at the last sovereign. "We have not brought these troubles on ourselves; therefore it is the will of our heavenly Father, and we must cheerfully submit."

"Ay, and be thankful that we have yet a sovereign to spend; but I wish that we could have paid our rent," said her husband.

The last sovereign is gone, and now credit must be had. Hanmore Lawson and his wife are well known to the tradespeople with whom they dealt, as being honourable, straightforward people. But then it was known that he had lost nearly his all three years ago. Besides, people generally were living on credit, so far as they could, and tradesmen were sufferers in common with the rest. A few weeks' credit is obtained, and then "they really cannot give more; there are so many, it is ruinous." Thus November set in, and money is gone, credit is gone, children must be clothed and fed; wants increase rather than diminish as the winter advances, and still prospects are worse than ever. The sky darkens yet more, the storm begins to rage now, and the waves grow angrier still. Where will the bark drive to? All is dark, gloomy, and foreboding: not one ray enlivens the scene.

Courage, Hanmore Lawson! What is that loving

wife but a bright sunbeam cheering your path? What are those little ones but sunbeams also? Were they to depart, your sky would indeed be dark.

"Yes, I am a blessed and happy man compared with thousands; and my precious wife and children are indeed treasures," thought Hanmore, as he saw the household goods disappearing, from day to day, to provide for their wants. "How hard it is to see things getting worse, and yet to trust, and to submit without a murmur!"

Now was the time for the truth of the proverb to be tested. Poverty had entered the door; but their love for each other had not yet flown. Flown! No. Shame upon the man, who, when trouble and want press him hard, will vent his impatient words upon his wife, and treat her coldly, and with neglect. Hanmore Lawson was not the man to do that. He had promised "to love and to cherish her till death," and as troubles thickened upon them, the more they clung to each other. A harsh, cross manner—an indifferent, unkind husband, would soon break that gentle, loving heart, and bring that fragile form to the grave. But with kindness and love, that delicate woman will do wonders. She will meet her husband with a smile, cheer him when downcast and sad, encourage him when desponding, and will willingly suffer with him whatever may betide. Noble, brave, magnanimous women! Truly

you are our better halves ; and who wouldn't love you when you shed such bright beams around us !

Hanmore Lawson did not verify the proverb, no more did his wife. There was a firm religious principle at the very foundation of their heart and life, and that is the best guarantee for a constant affection for each other. Their prospects might darken, and their appearance get shabbier, but still the family prayers were not given up, nor the holy sanctuary of God unfrequented. The Divine promises were their stay, and the Divine promises were realised even in their darkest hours. "At evening time it shall be light." The evening—yea, the black night was overhead and before them, and, behold, their path was light about them.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRANSPLANTED.

"Yes, as that gentle soul forsook
The fainting, trembling clay,
It caught the spirit of that world
Where tears are wiped away.
And still its cherish'd image gleams
Upon the parents' eye;
A guiding cherub to that home
Where every tear is dry."

How true it is that "one half the world does not know what the other half suffers!" A poor man, who has seen better days and has a large family, in a time when work is scarce, obtains a few days' employment at the squire's, or at the rich tradesman's house. He there sees the servants wastefully throwing away or mixing up as a meal for the dogs what he would thankfully accept as food for himself and family; but, hungry and almost starving as he is, he cannot summon courage to make known his wants or to beg, so he heaves a sigh, and the waste goes on. A poor mother, who has a delicate husband and several children, one of whom is a cripple, and never likely to rise from its bed, goes into a shop to lay out her hard-

earned money. The sum she has to spend is a mere trifle, but her wants are many; and over and over again had she calculated how she should lay her money out. It has been a hard matter to earn it, and now it seems, if possible, more difficult still to lay it out to the best advantage. Bread they must have, and a few other necessities of life, but she would like to provide some little delicacy for the poor invalid at home—some little luxury which would cause the flush of pleasure to overspread the countenance, and tempt the sick one to eat. But no; with all her plannings and contrivings she cannot do it. The stern necessities are too many to allow her to do so, and she enters the shop with a heavy heart. Whilst she is there, some well-to-do neighbour comes in to make purchases, and she steps back from the counter, too proud to expose her circumstances by making her small and humble purchases before another. Or, perhaps, whilst she is there some petted boys come into the shop to spend their pocket-money in sweets, and to make other boyish purchases. As the poor woman sees the money lavishly wasted, and then thinks of her own suffering and sorrowing ones at home, who can blame her if, for one moment, she covets of the abundance she sees around her? "It is not for herself that she wishes for that which is being uselessly spent. No; she would willingly endure. But those helpless ones at home;"—the tear comes into her eye, and she departs on her way sor-

rowing, and with an overflowing heart. It is not always the case, that those who are so ready to parade their wants before the world are really those who are the most in need and the most deserving. There are many who want seeking out, and whose sufferings are often known to no one but to Him who noticeth even the very fall of a sparrow. To seek out these distressed ones, and in a kind and Christian manner to elicit their wants, to sympathise with them, and unostentatiously to relieve them, is not only one of the highest Christian duties, but in the discharge of it, the words "It is more blessed to give than to receive" are verified.

At this time the local authorities, the more wealthy and charitably disposed in the city of Coventry, held meetings for the distribution of bread to the numbers of the starving poor. Soup-kitchens were opened, and other steps were taken to grapple with the increasing misery and distress of the place. Indeed, throughout the whole season much had been done to stave off the evil; but now the winter had begun, and every means and exertion were called forth and employed. Hundreds flocked to the distribution of bread, hundreds besieged the doors where soup was given away. But besides those who were thus relieved there were hundreds more who had never yet sought relief, and who would endure the greatest privations rather than do so. Honest poverty is no disgrace—honest poverty is what no one need be ashamed of; but when a family

that has occupied a position of comparative independence is suddenly reduced to poverty and want, we can understand how hard it must be to bring their minds to solicit relief, and can sympathise with and respect such feelings accordingly.

These were trying times for Hanmore Lawson and his young wife and family, and every day seemed more hard to be borne than its predecessor. A small sum was earned most weeks, and the greatest economy and self-denial were practised to make it go as far as possible towards supplying the bare necessities of life: then what was wanting had to be made up by the sale or pledging of some little household goods. First, the things that could be more easily spared—then, those that could be parted with with less reluctance of feeling—and then, those little presents which a fond lover or devoted husband had given,—things with which many a happy association of the past were connected. And as each article was brought out for disposal, and a sigh heaved the breast, or a tear moistened the eye, and the two loving ones cheered and comforted each other, under the sacrifice which was being made to buy their little ones bread, the thought naturally arose in their minds as to what they could dispose of next. Occasionally, a parcel of goods would be sent by some kind, but unknown friend, who, no doubt, partly guessed their circumstances, and did not wish to hurt their feelings by giving to them openly; but the calamity

had now become too universal in the neighbourhood to allow of such presents being very frequent, and prospects had become so alarming, that many of the better off of the middle classes looked with a fearful heart to the future, and knew not what to think.

Hitherto the extremities arising from poverty alone had been those against which Hanmore Lawson and his wife had had to contend; but now a worse and more terrible enemy entered their home. As long as comparative good health was the lot of each individual of their family, they could brave many of the ills arising from the nature of the times; but when sickness entered their dwelling, and laid the beloved one low, it seemed to unnerve the hearts of them all. They were now reduced to poverty, and had suffered far more than at one time they ever expected. Their cup, however, was not yet full. Sorrow in a new shape was about to pierce their heart, and a new trial awaited them.

It was a dull, dreary afternoon towards the latter part of November, and scores of half-fed, meanly-clad, unemployed, poor ribbon-weavers were passing along the streets. Hanmore Lawson had just returned from selling some other article of their property, and had by that means provided for their wants for the next few days. On reaching his home he found his wife nursing their youngest child, which appeared to be ill.

"Baby seems drooping," said the mother, in as cheerful a tone as she could summon. The child, on hear-

ing its father's footsteps, opened its eyes and smiled, but no longer ran to meet him as before ; for although, being the youngest, it still rejoiced in the name of "baby," it was, nevertheless, nearly three years old.

The father went up to the child and kissed it—then looked at his wife, and she at her husband. Each felt afraid to express the true feelings and doubts of the heart, and, therefore, said but little. They both felt that it was a time when cheering words of sympathy and of hope were needed, and, therefore, their own individual fears and sorrows were kept as far in the background as possible.

"It certainly looks poorly," said her husband ; "but wait a while, and if it gets no better, I will fetch the doctor."

"Yes. I think we may expect him to come when called for, since we owe him nothing ; but I hope there will be no necessity for calling him in."

As the night came on the child grew worse, so no further time was lost, and the medical man was called in. It was the same man who had always attended the family when anything was the matter, and also the Meltons, for many years prior to their death ; they had, therefore, every confidence in his skill. But there are times when all human efforts are unavailing, and all medical skill seems baffled. And though many cases of severe and dangerous illness abate, and the patient arises from his bed of sickness to pursue, once more,

the ordinary duties of life; yet there are other instances wherein the illness seems much less violent, but where all human means are of no effect. When the latter takes place, we are apt to feel almost surprised—and we say, “Surely, in these days of science and knowledge, the illness must give way to medical skill, provided there be neither old age nor long-seated disease at work in opposition.” But, in the case of the Christian at such times, the truth is, a loving Father wants His child at home—an additional voice is needed to swell the chorus and song of the blessed and redeemed above—the work is done, though it may be thus early—and, when such is the case, we can no longer stay them!

For some days, after calling in the doctor, poor Rosa’s baby continued to decline, and then it became evident that she must part with it. It was one night in the early part of December, and the anxious mother was watching over the couch of her little one. Their distress, and that of thousands more, seemed daily to increase, and her heart felt very heavy and sad. At times the poor little invalid would make a faint attempt to cry, and the fond mother would try to soothe it. Nothing is more distressing to a mother than to hear her child’s cry of agony and to be unable to ease it. After several little whines the child seemed somewhat easier, and Rosa knelt down beside the couch. Her heart was full; but there was One who observed and

knew all her griefs. For some time she prayed there, then a strange mixture of grief and fatigue and Divine comfort came over her, and still she knelt. At length she heard her babe moan, and footsteps enter the room ; and she arose.

"Dearest one, you must go and take some rest, and I will watch over our baby," said her husband ; for he it was that had entered.

"No, it will soon be over, and I will stay till the end ; and our neighbour, Mrs Morton, promised to come in again last thing."

"I will return presently," said Hanmore, leaving the room, for he could not bear to see the little creature so changed through suffering.

Rosa looked again at her babe and then drew aside the blinds of the window, and looked out. The day had been boisterous and rough, and at that time a brisk December wind was driving the clouds in heavy masses across the sky. Now and then a few faint stars were seen between the openings and then were hid again by the moving masses. One, brighter and larger than all the rest, appeared to struggle hard to break through the clouds. Now it would be faintly visible through the lighter parts of the cloud, then it would be lost altogether, till at last a fair opening in the clouds revealed it to her in all its brilliancy. It was the same which she had watched from the window of the little room by the sea-shore, the last evening of

her first visit there ; and at once her thoughts go back to that time. She thinks of her former trials, of the grave by the sea-shore, of her husband and their prosperity, of the loss of their little fortune and their mother, then of their late trials, and their dying child. A heavy cloud moves along, putting out the fainter lights as it proceeds in its course, and the star, as if to make the best use of its opportunity, burns more brightly than before, and seemed to smile upon her. It is strange that we generally associate with stars, thoughts of peace, of happiness, of heaven, and of blessed spirits above. But so it is. As the heavy cloud moved across its disk, and the last faint ray reached the sorrowful mother, she felt as if a bright spirit had visited her, and cheered her by its presence—"Some bright spirit waiting for its little sister spirit, her babe, in order to convey it to their Father's home."

All this took place in a few seconds ; and as the star became hid, and she drew down the blind and returned again to her babe, she felt as if some angel messenger was near to comfort her. "Are they not ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those that shall be heirs of salvation?"

A short, convulsive struggle took place for an instant and then ceased. The fond mother looks on with hands clasped, and then raises her tearful countenance to heaven, and sends forth thither a prayer. She suddenly pauses, and listens. The chimes of St

Michael's church break the stillness around, and sound like the chorus of angels. One faint struggle, and the little spirit leaves its frail tabernacle, and is caught up by its waiting sister. Another infant voice joins the heavenly song, and a tender and beautiful plant is translated from the cold shores of earth to bloom in a more genial atmosphere. The chimes cease their music as the two loving spirits mount upwards from earth, and then the clock strikes on the mother's ear like the funeral knell, telling her that she has here no babe.

CHAPTER XX.

FAINT, BUT PURSUING.

"Upward, onward, ever forward;
In life's journey never stay;
Be thou diligent and cheerful;
Keep a watchfulness, and pray."

It was the day before Christmas-day, and stern winter had come in all its vigour and severity. To stop to describe the nature of that season is unnecessary, for being so recent, it is still present to the minds of all. Those who had plenty of food and clothing and fuel, together with good health and comfortable homes, would no doubt enjoy the severe and healthy winter that has just passed; but to those who were suffering all the privations of poverty, it was trying in the extreme. Some weeks before, Lord Leigh had addressed a letter to the *Times*—a copy of which is inserted at the commencement of this work—and large contributions were weekly received towards ameliorating the fearful distress of the poorer classes of Coventry and its neighbourhood. If any man living is deserving of the name of a nobleman and a gentleman, he is: and long as he may live, he, together with those who

originated and subscribed towards "The Coventry Relief Fund," will be deserving of the gratitude of that town and surrounding districts. All local efforts to alleviate the distress had long been inadequate. And although large sums of money were daily received from other parts of the country, yet when so many thousands of people were suffering, the amount afforded to each individual was but trifling. Great, therefore, as were the noble efforts made by the nobility, clergy, and gentry of the place to relieve the distresses of their poorer neighbours, the sufferings and privations which they endured at that time must have been of no ordinary degree. Our noble, generous-hearted Queen and family subscribed with their usual liberality to the above-named fund, as also did thousands more. And as they gathered around their own comfortable hearths, or sat down to the abundance of their well-spread board, we feel sure that they would not feel one whit the less happy from the thought that they had given something towards lessening the miseries of others.

It was on the day in question that Hanmore Lawson went out to make some few purchases for the morrow. Like as when some drowning ship's company—after toiling away at the pumps to prevent their vessel from sinking, perceive that the water still gains upon them—betake themselves to the rum-cask to refresh and warm their numbed bodies, and then give themselves up to their fate;—or like as when some family, in a be-

sieged and famine-stricken city, perceive that the last few stores are brought out, determine on having a feast with them, and then to lay themselves down and die. So it was with kindred feelings to these that Hanmore Lawson started from home to make his few purchases for the coming Christmas. It had often proved a source of astonishment to himself and his wife as to how they had weathered the storm so long. Not that they were insensible to the merciful providence of that Guiding Hand which was leading them, and in which they trusted ; but on looking back from time to time on their course, they marvelled that they had been enabled to endure so many privations. Hitherto, what with slight earnings from time to time—what with the sale or pledging of their more valuable and portable goods—together with the presents of some kind and unknown friends, they had managed to struggle on without appealing for relief from the general fund or from the parish.

“There are many worse off than we are, and it would be wrong to deprive them of the relief, if we can possibly do without,” he would think at times, when he returned with some little earnings, or with his purchases, made by the disposal of some little trinket, or furniture. As for the larger and more useful parts of his furniture, the landlord prevented his disposing of those ; but still, with good management on the part of his excellent wife, great self-denial, and many priva-

tions, time had passed on, and they had borne up thus far to their own amazement. Now, however, the last stand was being taken to face the enemy, the last charge was being made; if this fail, they must lay down their arms and submit. Their watches, the few jewels which they were possessed of, some of their lighter furniture, and even wearing apparel, had been disposed of to meet their necessities; but now there was nothing more which they could part with.

To-morrow would be Christmas day—a day when everybody provides some little luxury or feast for his family, to which they are not usually accustomed, and when every one tries to be happy. And although the future prospects appeared darker to Hanmore Lawson and family than ever they had done before, yet he was determined to make it as happy a Christmas as he possibly could to them, even though they should have to appeal for relief the day following. Therefore it was with a sort of heavy heart, bent upon being happy, that he started out to make his purchases for the morrow. Poverty had long entered in at the door, but love had not flown yet.

On his return home, as the sun was still shining brightly, although snow covered the ground, and a keen frosty air was blowing, he persuaded his wife to go out for a short walk.

“My dear Rosa,” said he, “I am sure you will feel cheered and refreshed by a walk, however short, and this is a time when we ought to banish all anxious fore-

bodings; so wrap up, and let the children go with us."

"Provided you take us in one particular direction," said his wife, putting her arm round him, and looking lovingly up into his face.

"Any way you choose, my dear," and away she went to get the children ready.

When a young and loving mother loses her babe, it cannot be wondered at that when opportunity occurs she goes to the grave to weep there. One spot there is in the world which has a peculiar and mournful interest to her, and that is where her little one is laid. What another Christmas may bring forth, no one can tell; but that was by far the worst that Hanmore Lawson and his wife had ever seen. It would not do for us, however, to have no clouds and storms—we should not appreciate the sunshine.

There is something very solemnising to the feelings in visiting the burying-place of the dead, whether that place be the quiet village churchyard or the cemetery of a crowded city. The visitant feels alone, and yet not alone. The sounds of the busy world without come booming along from a distance, reminding him that he is still amidst the sin, and strife, and turmoil of life. The monuments of affection which stand around, and which have been raised as a tribute to departed goodness and worth, seem to people the air with the living spirits of the dead, whilst the grave of some dear lost

one draws up the thoughts to heaven, to commune for a while with happy souls on high, and with Him who is God both of the militant soldier below and the glorified saint above. Sad, sad it is to part from those we love, and to think that, long as our pilgrimage may be, we shall no more see their face on earth ; but we are comforted and cheered not a little by the thought that heaven will not be a strange place to us on our arrival thither. And like as when our friends leave one after another for some distant shore, we cease to look upon this as our home, but pack up our goods and join them ; so when one after another of our family are taken to heaven, we feel that our earthly chords have been loosened, and we long to slip our moorings and to be gone.

It was with feelings partly similar to these that Hanmore Lawson and his wife stood over the grave of their little one. With them, as with all other Christians, there was a stronger tie to draw their souls to heaven than those formed by departed ones who had gone thither ; yet they felt that heavenward attractions were increasing, although there was much in life still worth living for.

“Come, my dear wife,” said Hanmore, after they had been some time there, “the air is keen, and the snow penetrating ; let us get home before the sun goes in.”

After leaving the grave, some few yards on their

way out of the cemetery, they came to a bend in the path, where, between an opening in the fine old trees that surround that city of the dead, they saw their town rising up before them, far outtopped by its lofty spires.

"See," said he, "there are your beautiful spires again, still rearing their heads into the clear, blue sky, and leaving the smoke, and turmoil, and strife far below them!"

"Yes," said his wife, "and still pointing up from a world of sorrow, and want, and sin, to holiness, peace, and rest for ever."

"It is so; let us follow on in the same direction, onwards, and upwards, and 'excelsior,' till our feet tread the distant hills above.

"Oh, to rest in peace for ever,
Join'd with happy saints above,
Where no foe my heart can sever,
From the Saviour whom I love!"

That Christmas-eve the bells from ten thousand steeples rang out a merry peal, as they have done for ages past. Happy greetings took place as the children, who had been long absent at school, rushed once more into a parent's open arms. And carols were sung, and the music of the waits broke softly on the midnight air, in commemoration of Heaven's best gift to man. All this took place just as in years gone by. But this is only one side of the picture, and the brighter side too.

Unhappy and fallen ones would walk the streets, and shiver in the cold. Some there would be whom that season would only remind of their isolation from man, and their estrangement from God. Gaunt hunger and poverty would press their victims; and the sighs of the poor, the widow, and the fatherless would rise up to heaven as they thought of the rejoicings without, and they only destitute and sad. But let us rejoice that He whose birth we then celebrate came to save the lost and sinful ones; that He not only cared for, but loved the poor; and that the cup of cold water given to His poor and sorrowing ones shall in nowise lose its reward. Let us learn to speak gently as He did, to love as He loved, and to bear and forbear even as did our Lord.

Large as were the crowds of people who thronged to the fine old churches of Coventry on the Christmas day, none went in a more devotional spirit than Hanmore Lawson and his wife. The time of worship had ever been to them a happy time: and as they left their own quiet street and mingled in the throngs of people who were passing along the public thoroughfares leading to the church, the chiming of the bells, the event which they were then celebrating, and the piercingly cold frosty air made them trip along more lightly than ever. And as they entered the sacred building, its comfortable warmth, its hallowed associations, the beauty of its architecture seemed greatly to contrast

with the cold cheerless world without. There is something very impressive in the sight of a large assembly of human beings ; and when they are met together for that greatest and best of all Christian duties, the worship of God, there is not a grander spectacle in creation. As the crowds kept pouring in and took their places till the noble old church was well filled, Rosa thought what a responsible office it was to minister to such crowds of people. And then when she looked up at that finely-carved old roof, or at the lofty and airy pillars, and reflected how many generations of worshippers had assembled there, and that, in a few more years, those that were now met together for worship would have passed away, and be succeeded by others, she felt humbled, solemnised, and reverent in spirit. Whilst occupied in these and similar thoughts, the numbers entering the church became fewer, the bells ceased their chiming, and the organ began to play as a commencement to the service. Every note seemed to her like a chime from the better land, telling her that although changes might take place, and old faces disappear and be succeeded by new ones, till generation after generation had passed away ; yet there was a blissful shore where every Christian voyager on life's sea got safely landed, and where the storms of sorrow and distress never frowned. And when the beautiful liturgy of the Church commenced—"the exhortation," urging to penitence and prayer ; the "confession,"

pleading the wanderings and sins of the people, and a Father's mercy and pity; the "absolution," announcing God's forgiveness and pardon to every truly penitent sinner that trusted in His word; the other prayers and services which spoke of a Saviour's boundless love, and of the "good news" which were at that season proclaimed to the world—she also, like many more, could feel that the house of God was none other than the gate of heaven. The anthem, the prayers, and the sermon, all seemed to inspire her with holy love and submission to the Divine will. And then the holy communion, too—what a privilege it was to gather around their Lord's table and to partake of such a heavenly banquet! How it strengthened them for coming trials to join with the faithful in celebrating their Lord's dying command, and in eating and drinking by faith of His blessed body and blood! The service comes to a close, the blessing is pronounced, and the congregation leave the holy temple for that next most sacred place upon earth—"home." And few if any would gather around their Christmas board that day with happier and kinder feelings of love towards each other and the world around, than Hanmore Lawson, his wife and family. That was true magnanimity of soul which could enjoy the present hour and be happy when the next appeared so dark and portending—that was a happy temperament which could sit down to the little feast to prepare which the last

farthing in the world had been expended, and laugh and be joyous with each other when it was uncertain where the next would come from. But the Lawsons had manfully done their own duty, and could then leave to God the rest. And when people can sit down with a clear conscience in that respect and have a firm trust in the promises and fatherly love of God, how can they help but feel happy? how can they do otherwise than accept the present mercies and be thankful for them?

But time halts not nor lingers in its course, and Christmas-day, with its meetings and festivities, passes away like other days. The evening drew on, and now the stern realities of the morrow began to stare them in the face. They have had the last romp with their children, and happy Christmas has passed. But the morrow must be met, and how are they to meet it? There is one way, and that the only right one, and that is to meet it with minds and hearts fortified by prayer. The large old Bible is reached, and the chapter read; the evening prayer ascends up to heaven in earnest wrestlings and pleadings with God; the prayer prevails; a loving Father looks down upon His children and blesses them, and bids to trust and not be afraid.

The morrow dawns, cold, frosty, and wintry. The remnants of yesterday barely suffice for breakfast; and then?—

That was a question which was daily asked by thou-

sands in Coventry and its neighbourhood, during that cruel winter of poverty and loss of work. The Bible is again reached, and the accustomed morning prayer is heard in heaven. They rise from their knees, and the husband and wife sit down to deliberate what is best to be done. They had long weathered the storm, and their privations had been many—the wolf at the door, long as it had been there, had not driven love through the window—but now the last morsel of bread was gone, and they had no means whatever to supply more.

“Well, my dear Rosa, it has come to this at last,” said the affectionate husband, as he reached down his hat to go and appeal for relief; “I never expected it, and God only knows what I feel.”

Whilst saying this, the postman’s knock was heard at the door; but where could they have a letter from? Times had been too bad for them to correspond, even if they had possessed relations.

“It is from your friend Simon,” said he, as their little girl rushed to the door for the letter.

“Eh, Rosa! what is this, a cheque, and for a hundred pounds!”

Their hearts beat hard and fast. Could it possibly be for them? Surely there must be some mistake. No, it is all right. One hundred pounds, and for them too. The storm had passed, and the sunshine smiled again. The wolf retired from their door, and love and happiness reigned there without intermission.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOBLE AIMS.

"Constant, calm, unfearing,
Boldly pursuing,
In good conscience steering,
Manfully for ever.

Winds and waves defying,
And on God relying;
Shall *He* find me flying?
Never, never, never!"

CUSTOM has been said to be second nature—and custom soon becomes a habit, and this is far more easily acquired than got rid of. And so Mr Mayberry found it. He had so long indulged in extravagance and luxury, that he had to practise great self-denial to keep his wants within moderate bounds. And although, through the influence of Mr Waterland, he had obtained a clerkship with a very liberal salary, yet he was often tempted to lash out and live beyond his means. Fortunately for him, he had started afresh amidst new associations; and as his moral feelings of manliness and honour were not quite extinguished, he began also with a determination of winning his way back to that path of justice and equity from whence he had so far

wandered. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities ; but a wounded spirit who can bear !" says the wise man. And this also is true in the converse. Uprightness, truthfulness, and honour bring with them their own reward, in the peace and satisfaction which they impart to the mind. But when they have long been dethroned from their lawful places, and driven from a man's conduct and life, then each new victory which they obtain, and each new power which they acquire in reforming the man's character afresh, convey also to the individual himself a greater sense of peace and happiness than ever. Great, therefore, as were Mr Mayberry's struggles against his own habits of reckless extravagance, he found that "the path of duty is the path of safety"—that to bring the wants and desires within the means of furnishing them, is true philosophy—and that to "render to all their dues," is the way to happiness and self-respect. His first effort, therefore, was to make his expenses square with his income ; and finding, by the first Christmas after his obtaining the situation, that he had succeeded at last in "living within his means," the curb was applied a little more tightly, and to save somewhat from his income was his next endeavour. Most of his creditors were rich men, but he knew full well that one of them would be well-nigh ruined by his failure—and that one was Hanmore Lawson. He was determined, therefore, if possible, to pay him to the full, and though it might

be a work of years, he would try what could be done. In this laudable determination he was encouraged by his family, who willingly strove to help him. As for Sophia, this was the greatest wish of her life, and though, at the close of the year 1859, when she found that her father could now live without getting into debt, she gave her hand to Mr Waterland ; yet she still wrote to urge him on in this laudable endeavour.

We have before spoken of the noble efforts which were made by the more wealthy inhabitants of Coventry and its neighbourhood to stem back the torrent of misery which threatened to overwhelm the town, and of the help which was rendered from other quarters.

"My dear Harvey," said Mrs Waterland to her husband, one morning some few days before Christmas "what distressing accounts one hears of the sufferings in Coventry ! Don't you think you could have a collection from the congregation for them ?"

"I have been thinking of it ; but you know, my dear Sophy, I am not the incumbent, and am only in charge of the congregation for a time, so that I cannot do quite as I would."

"Well, I don't think you need fear having a collection for such a charitable cause, and especially where they are so general ; just see," said she, as she handed him the *Times*, "what a list of subscriptions and collections are announced this week !"

"It is indeed a list: what say you to our having the collection on Christmas-day?"

"Oh, there couldn't be a better time! for when people see their friends around them, and enter into the festivities of the season, they will surely spare something for the poor and destitute."

Accordingly, on the Christmas-day, Harvey Waterland's eloquent appeal was liberally responded to by his congregation; and whilst Hanmore Lawson and family were gathered around their Christmas board, cheered and comforted by Christian trust and joy, an equally happy gathering assembled round the hearth of Harvey Waterland.

Mr Mayberry, his wife and daughters, had come up from the North in order to spend the Christmas with his son-in-law; and we call them, what they really were, a happy party—not simply because of the joyful season which they were celebrating, and because friends and members of the family long separated were once more met together again—but because one party had gained moral strength and courage to do what was right, in opposition to custom and inclination; and because they all felt that they had been helping their neighbour, and doing something towards lessening the amount of misery in the world. A bright fire was burning in the drawing-room grate, and the whole appearance of the room bespoke ease and comfort—for Mr Waterland had furnished his house comfortably

and well, and he had found that, by care and good management, they could make a respectable appearance and keep a good house, with an income of less than £500 a-year. It was the hour just before dinner, when everybody feels unsettled, and when general conversation seems to flag. The gentlemen turned over the books lying on the table, and made an attempt at discussing some of the popular works of the day ; and the ladies chatted about other trifling family matters. A few sprays of the mistletoe were arranged round the chimney-glass, telling of the season of the year, and regular old Christmas weather reigned without—if it consisted of cold, frost, and snow. A few poor shivering wretches would pass along the street at times, and look wistfully up at the warm, comfortable rooms, to excite the pity of some occasional beholder ; otherwise, there was but little stirring in that fashionable quarter of the great metropolis. Everybody who could was keeping Christmas within doors, and trying to banish sorrow and anxious thoughts of the cold, stern world without from their minds and hearths. The lamp-lighter was running about with his short ladder with all the dexterity and quickness for which he is proverbial, as though he were in a greater hurry than usual. Christmas seemed to be reigning everywhere, in short, save in the minds and circumstances of those poor miserable-looking objects that crawled at intervals down the streets—and even with them, too, facts some-

times come out which lead one to expect that circumstances are not always so bad as they appear ; so that many of them may have had a pretty good Christmas after all.

"Really, what pitiable objects there are in the world !" said Sophia, as she stood at the window watching the lamplighter without, and saw one of those poor creatures above named go shivering past. "One would wish to be as rich as Cræsus sometimes ;" she continued, "and especially at a season like the present, when every one tries to be happy."

"And you would need to be as rich as Cræsus, my dear, if you want to turn into a thriving and respectable citizen every such poor wanderer you see passing along the streets ;" said her husband. "By the way, did I tell you what was collected at church this morning for the poor weavers at Coventry ?"

"No, what was it ? I should guess something handsome."

"Well, between forty and fifty pounds, which I think is indeed a handsome sum to collect for another neighbourhood."

"And I will tell you a piece of news," said her father, "that will doubtless interest you. I sent a hundred pounds to Coventry before starting yesterday. I had but one creditor there, and he, I fear, would suffer much by my bankruptcy, but he would get the hundred pounds to-morrow morning at latest."

"Oh, I am so pleased ! mamma told me you had saved as much during the year, but she did not tell me whom you had paid it to."

"So, I was partly forestalled at last, it seems," said her father ; "I tell you what, Harvey," he continued, "never tell your wife any secrets, for I'll be bound she can't keep them—that is advice number one. Number two—Don't get beyond your income, or you will rue it as long as you live."

"As regards the first piece of advice," said his daughter, "I shall claim a wife's privileges, and insist upon knowing everything, and then we shall not be likely to do otherwise than follow the second."

"My dear Sophy," said Mrs Mayberry, "your papa is giving advice which, so far as the first part is concerned, he no longer practises."

"Then, I suppose, we must go on as before ; eh, Sophy?" said Mr Waterland. "I must let you know everything, and then leave you to keep all square."

"Ah ! well, I give in," said Mr Mayberry, with a laugh ; "by the way, I don't think you will ever be likely to get any fortune with her, however persevering and successful I may become."

"Oh, don't trouble about that, my dear sir," said Mr Waterland, "she is a fortune in herself ; I always knew she was a treasure, and I have not been dis—"

"Hush ! my dear, it is well you think so. Dinner is announced ; and, papa, you have pleased me so much,"

said Sophia, taking her father's arm, "that I shall confer upon you the honour of escorting me to dinner."

Thus they proceeded to their Christmas feast. And although there might not be, perhaps, that splendour and luxury which the Mayberrys had been accustomed to, there was, nevertheless, plenty, and they were far happier than in days gone by. They had lived and learned to see that happiness does not consist in making a show, and occupying a high position in the world, but in peace of mind and heart, and love and good-will one towards another. Where these are, there cannot fail to be happiness; and if there may be less glitter and show, there will be, nevertheless, fewer of the heartburnings and jealousies of life. No one would ever wish for poverty, especially those who have been accustomed to the comforts and luxuries of life; but Mr Mayberry feels that he has only just begun life in earnest. And when he reflects upon his past life, and thinks how hollow was the appearance which he made, and the enjoyment which some might think he derived from it—as also the continual fear of a crash, and the knowledge that it would come some time—after such reflections, he concludes that he is now, on the whole, a far happier man than before. He is doing what is right now, and before he was not. And could he but once more lie down at night with the thought that he had paid everybody, and owed no man anything, he thinks he could willingly plod along as a

clerk in a merchant's office for the remainder of his days.

Our narrative now draws to a close. The worst is now, we trust, over with Coventry and its neighbourhood, although there is still much poverty and need of help. The "Pekin ribbon," which her Majesty graciously sent to that town for manufacture, bids fair to become very fashionable, and to give considerable employment to the poor weavers. And whilst we are writing, Hanmore Lawson is busy with his looms—the hundred pounds which he received have enabled him to begin again upon a small scale—fortune seems again to be smiling upon him, and happiness reigns in his house. They have found that which alone can give happiness in times of prosperity, and can cheer and comfort in times of sorrow and distress. They go on loving and beloved by each other, and look up with gratitude to Him who enabled them to weather the late trying storm.

Mr Waterland and his wife are as happy as they need wish to be here. The former is popular with his congregation, takes delight in the duties of his sacred calling, and finds a loving and valuable help-mate in his wife. And as regards our old friend the rector, he is fast declining in health and years, but is comforted by the help which he receives from many of his parishioners, and in seeing them walk according to the truth, and of these none more than Simon. The waves still

roll on the shore, as they have done for ages past ; at one time lashing themselves into fury against the rocks, and at another time enlivening the village by their mournful music. The old church-bells still call the worshippers to God's house, and the voices of prayer and praise ascend up from within those sacred walls. Such objects and customs time seems to alter but little. But since the incidents of our narrative first commenced, the grave has opened her mouth from time to time, old faces have disappeared, and new ones have taken their places. All this, and the changes which are daily taking place in those who still survive, tell us that we are fast drifting to another shore. May that be a blessed shore to us all, dear reader, and may we meet with a happy welcome !

“ Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating,
Funeral marches to the grave.”

THE END.

JAMES NISBET AND CO.'S

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

THE PUBLIC SPEAKER, and HOW to MAKE ONE.

By a CAMBRIDGE MAN. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

THE ROMANCE of NATURAL HISTORY. By P. H.

GOSSE, F.R.S. With Illustrations by WOLF. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"This is a charming book. . . . Every lover of nature, every lover of the marvellous, every lover of the beautiful, every soul that can feel the charm of true poetry, must be deeply grateful to Mr Gosse for an intellectual treat of the highest order. . . . This romance of natural history will be one of the best gift-books which can be procured for the season of Christmas and the New Year."—*Daily News*.

TRUE MANHOOD: Its Nature, Foundation, and Develop-

ment. A Book for Young Men. By the Rev. W. LANDELS. Crown 8vo, 8s. 6d. cloth.

"This is a book true to its title. It contains on every page sentiments of the highest value for the proper formation of manhood, in the Gospel sense of the term. There is a mass of dignified sense brought to bear on the every-day concerns of life, as these are developed from youth to manhood. It is a book which every young man should attentively read, and every family possess."—*Northern Warder*.

MEMOIR of the LIFE and BRIEF MINISTRY of the Rev.

DAVID SANDEMAN, Missionary to China. By the Rev. ANDREW A. BONAR, Author of the "Memoir of Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne," &c. &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"The life of David Sandeman could hardly have been written by a hand, however unskilled, so that it should have been without interest, instruction, and reproof; but penned by the biographer of M'Cheyne, in his own genial, loving, and winning way, this memoir will be a permanent addition to our stock of religious biography. . . . No reader can peruse this brief memoir without both pleasure and much profit."—*The Dial*.

DAVID, KING of ISRAEL. The Divine Plan and Lessons

of his Life. By the Rev. WILLIAM GARDEN BLAIRIE, A.M. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"The subject has been handled in a consistent and masterly way. . . . It is written with much clearness, eloquence, and force."—*Morning Post*.

"This is a work of considerable research, and deep interest, and may, we think, be competently stated to be the best on the subject to which it is dedicated. We much value the tone and spirit of the work."—*Christian Observer*.

EVENINGS with JOHN BUNYAN; or, *The Dream Interpreted*. By JAMES LARGE. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. cloth.

"The volume does no discredit to the honoured name with which it is associated. It abounds in most valuable matter, eminently calculated to instruct and to edify. It is replete with interesting facts and circumstances, all in point, and appropriate citations from the Word of God, as well as from sacred poetry."—*British Standard*.

HELEN DUNDAS; or, *The Pastor's Wife*. By ZAIDA. With a Preface by the Author of "Haste to the Rescue." Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"This is an exceedingly pretty, well-written tale. Its object, much better achieved than that of many a more pretentious volume, is to exhibit the pastor's wife as a true 'helpmeet' to her husband. With country pastors, and their wives especially, the very useful and feasible suggestions for profitable and interesting work amongst the middle and lower classes of their parishioners, with which the book abounds, will, if we are not much mistaken, render it most deservedly popular."—*Dublin Christian Examiner*.

THE PERSON and WORK of the HOLY SPIRIT: Being Sermons recently Preached in London by Fifteen Clergymen of the Church of England. With Special Reference to a Revival of Religion in the Church of God. With a Preface by the Rev. EMILIUS BAYLEY. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We heartily thank their distinguished authors for their praiseworthy and, we trust, not unfruitful efforts, to promote the study of the Spirit's agency, and a sound, because a spiritual, revival of religion."—*Scottish Press*.

THE BLACK SHIP; and other Allegories and Parables. By the Author of "Tales and Sketches of Christian Life," &c. 16mo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"This is a curious collection of multifarious subjects, all of a character to command attention and to repay it. Its airy, romantic character imparts a charm which will be deeply felt by young people."—*British Standard*.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. Lectures delivered in the Parish Church, St Giles-in-the-Fields. By NEVISON LORRAINE, Curate. Crown 8vo, 3s. cloth.

"These are seven lectures on the Lord's Prayer, and in them Mr Lorraine exhibits the true catholic spirit in which it should be used and treated."—*Clerical Journal*.

THE HEART and the MIND. True Words on Training and Teaching. By Mrs HUGH A. KENNEDY. Fcap. 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"This is a valuable work, which parents will do well to read and ponder. There are important suggestions in it illustrated by facts."—*Church of England Magazine*.

"This is not an ordinary loose performance, but a very solid, well-digested, and deeply instructive volume."—*Christian Witness*.

THE PENITENT'S PRAYER. A Practical Exposition of the Fifty-first Psalm. By the Rev. THOMAS ALEXANDER, M.A., Chelsea. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Mr Alexander gives us a literal translation of his own, very accurate, with an analysis and explanation, in which some pithy things are drawn from old divines. The body of the exposition follows, and the whole is wound up by a number of other metrical translations, making the book all that can be desired for the pleasure and profit of readers who unite taste with religious feeling or desire. Of the exposition itself we cannot speak too highly. It is soundly evangelical and deeply impressive. The style is peculiarly lucid and terse; every sentence contains a thought, and every line a sentence."—*The Patriot*.

FROM LONDON to LUCKNOW: Memoranda of Mutinies,

Marches, Flights, Fights, and Conversations. To which is added, An Opium-Smuggler's Explanation of the Peiho Massacre. By A Chaplain in Her Majesty's Indian Service. Two vols. 8vo, 14s. cloth.

"We have much pleasure in commending this interesting work to the attention of our readers."—*Inverness Courier*.

"There is quite enough of adventure and historical recital to make the work interesting. These volumes will well repay the perusal of them, if information on important matters, conveyed in a pleasant gossiping style, is felt to be desirable."—*Clerical Journal*.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH: Its History, Worship, Doc-

trine, and Constitution, traced for the first Three Hundred Years. By

W. D. KILLEN, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History. 8vo, 12s. cloth.

"There is certainly no book in the English language to be compared with this work of Dr Killen's, exhibiting very high literary excellencies. . . . The work is entitled to our cordial recommendation, and is, in all respects, one of great excellence and value."—*Witness*.

LETTERS of HANNAH MORE to ZACHARY MACAU-

LAY, Esq. Containing Notices of Lord Macaulay's Youth. Now first published. Edited and Arranged by ARTHUR ROBERTS, M.A., Rector of Woodrising, Norfolk. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Considerable interest attaches to the youth of the celebrated Lord Macaulay, and the volume before us furnishes the reader with many interesting details on the subject, now for the first time made public, together with many interesting anecdotes and thoughts on various subjects."—*Brighton Gazette*.

THE BOOK of PSALMS: Arranged in Daily Portions for

Devotional Reading Twice Through in the Course of the Year. With Suggestions to Promote Personal Application. By the Rev. A. R. C. DALLAS. New Edition, crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"This work will prove useful. . . . As a devotional manual we are glad to recommend the volume."—*Church of England Magazine*.

HELP HEAVENWARD: Words of Strength and Heart-

cheer to Zion's Travellers. By the Rev. OCTAVIUS WINSLOW, D.D. 18mo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"This pleasant little book reads like a prose poem. It is replete with sound searching practical remark, conveyed in the winning and affectionate spirit, and with the luxuriant richness of phraseology by which the author is characterised."—*Scottish Guardian*.

THE DAY of the LORD, the Dissolution of the Earth by

Fire, and the New Heavens and the New Earth of St Peter and St John, in connexion with various other Details, Millennial and Post-Millennial. By GEORGE OGILVY, Esq. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"The volume is one to which even those who differ most widely from its conclusions will not repent giving an attentive and unprejudiced perusal."—*Literary Churchman*.

THE SONG of CHRIST'S FLOCK in the TWENTY-

THIRD PSALM. By JOHN STOUGHTON, Author of "Lights of the World," "Spiritual Heroes," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Mr Stoughton writes carefully, and therefore well; the style is clear, vigorous, and expressive; and well worthy of one of the ablest of English ministers, both in thought and manner, is this volume of expository discourses."—*Scottish Press*.

"Mr Stoughton's volume may be earnestly and warmly recommended. . . . Its chaste piety will make it deservedly acceptable to a large class of readers. Looked at with the purpose of the writer, we know of no recent volume of religious meditation which is likely to be more profitably read or pleasantly remembered. It is a cheerful and harmonious rendering of David's celebrated psalm."—*Daily News*.

SERMONS on the PARABLES of SCRIPTURE, Addressed to a Village Congregation. By the Rev. ARTHUR ROBERTS, M.A., Rector of Woodrising, Author of "Village Sermons," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"An excellent volume of sound, practical instruction, well adapted for family reading."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*.

SERMONS on the BOOK of JOB. By the late Rev. GEORGE WAGNER, Incumbent of St Stephen's Church, Brighton. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"There is no attempt at subtle logic, or rhetorical eloquence, or learned criticism; but there is what is better than either—a plain and forcible exhibition of scriptural truth brought home to human hearts."—*Evangelical Christendom*.

THE BOOK of PSALMS; With an Exposition, Evangelical, Typical, and Prophetical, of the Christian Dispensation. By W. WILSON, D.D., Vicar of Holy Rood, Southampton, and Canon of Winchester. Two vols. 8vo, 10s. cloth.

"These volumes contain a vast fund of experimental and instructive truth, and will well repay a diligent perusal."—*Church of England Magazine*.

A PRACTICAL and EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY on the EPISTLE to TITUS. By the Rev. WILLIAM GRAHAM, D.D., LL.D., Author of "The Spirit of Love," "The Jordan and the Rhine," &c. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"The Commentary is more readable than works of the same nature. It is a good but little volume. It is one of those works, neither very large nor very small, that readers interested in this class of literature will probably secure."—*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*.

THE WELSH REVIVAL: Its Origin and Development.

By the Rev. THOMAS PHILLIPS, Hereford. With an Introduction by the Rev. JOHN VENN, M.A., Vicar of St Peter's, Hereford. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

"Mr Phillips delineates the origin of the movement in Wales, its progress and extent, very fully; while the results and general effects and principal features are depicted copiously and vividly. The book is highly deserving of favour, and special thanks are due to Mr Phillips for his good offices."—*Christian Witness*.

EVENTIDE; A Devotional Diary for the Close of Day. By

MARY ANN KELTY, Author of "Visiting my Relations," "The Real and the Beau Ideal," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"There are in this volume three hundred and sixty-five readings on texts of Scripture, each occupying a page. The remarks are sensible as well as pious."—*Clerical Journal*.

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE of GOD in CHRIST JESUS

our LORD. Being the Fourth Series of Lectures Preached at the Request of the Edinburgh Association for Promoting the Study of Prophecy. By

the Rev. JAMES KELLY, M.A., Author of "The Apocalypse Interpreted in the Light of the Day of the Lord," &c. New Edition. Crown 8vo, 4s. cloth.

"It is one of the freshest, richest, and most thoughtful volumes on prophecy which we have ever read."—*Journal of Prophecy*.

CHRIST and HIS CHURCH in the BOOK of PSALMS.

By the Rev. ANDREW A. BONAR, Author of "Memoirs of M'Cheyne," "Commentary on Leviticus," &c. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. cloth.

"There is a soundness in the work, because the writer admits an historical and literal meaning, as adapted for general usefulness, while he responds to the voice of the churches in all ages by admitting that the Holy Spirit intended to teach all ages by the Psalms. The work is a discreet, pious, and learned production, far above many similar attempts to illustrate these devout compositions."—*Clerical Journal*.



